

**PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOLS
'CAUSING CONCERN' AND 'EFFECTIVE'
SCHOOLS AS A STRATEGY FOR
IMPROVEMENT:
AN INVESTIGATION OF SIX PARTNERSHIPS**

DAVID A. ANDERSON

**INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION,
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

DOCTOR IN EDUCATION

2006

Abstract

In recent years schools in England and Wales have been subject to Central Government's reform agenda characterised by national strategies to raise standards and measure performance. The introduction of Inspection in 1993 by Ofsted represents the sharp focus placed on performance and accountability as schools could be inspected and named as 'failing.' The Education Act 1997 introduced the concept of Schools Causing Concern (SCC) and set out the powers of LEAs to take action where schools would not or could not address their weaknesses adequately.

This study looks at the actions of one LEA (2002-3) to support the improvement of six secondary SCC by partnering them with six 'effective' schools. The case studies of these partnerships underline the importance of leadership, belief in partnership and the building of relationships which support learning. The research questions the capacity of SCC to benefit from partnership within a short time period and opens up a debate around transferability of systems and practices. This study asks if 'partnership' is an 'inside-out' capacity building strategy or another 'outside- in' solution. It centres on the relationship between the headteachers as the key to building effective partnerships. It challenges the ability of the LEA to broker effective partnerships between schools and reflects on the introduction of School Improvement Partners (DfES, 2005) and the current emphasis on partnership and collaboration.

The study argues that while 'partnership' holds the possibility of supporting SCC, it is subject to the vagaries of human relationships, likes and dislikes and dependant upon the capacity of schools to learn from each other. Partnership requires time to develop and impact and as such represents an unreliable and flawed strategy for securing improvement in SCC short term.

CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE: PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ‘SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN’ AND ‘EFFECTIVE’ SCHOOLS AS A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVEMENT: AN INVESTIGATION OF SIX PARTNERSHIPS	1
ABSTRACT	2
CONTENTS	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
DECLARATION OF WORD LENGTH	7
SUPPORTING STATEMENT	8
GLOSSARY	16
CHAPTER 1 SETTING THE SCENE	17
(a) Background and context	18
(b) Rational for the thesis	22
(c) Overview of partnership working	23
(d) Research Questions	24
(e) Relevance of the thesis	26
(f) Professional Context	27
(g) Structure of the thesis	27
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	29
(a) Characteristics of effective schools	29
(b) Capacity for change	34
(c) Relative effectiveness and transferability	37
(d) Labelling schools	39
(e) School Culture	43
(f) Leadership in SCC and effective schools	45
(g) Working in partnership	53
Conclusion	56
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	58
Section (i) Research Approach	58
Section (ii) Research Design	61
Section (iii) Data Collection	64
(a) Interviews	66

(b) email conversations, chance meetings and observations	70
Section (iv) Ethical dimensions in relation to the research context	71
Section (v) Data Analysis	77
Section (vi) Validity and trustworthiness	78
Conclusion	80
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF DATA SETS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CASE STUDY FINDINGS	82
Part 1 The LEA Perspective	83
(a) Astrologers' view	84
(b) The School Link Advisers' view	90
(c) Monitoring and evaluation	93
Conclusion	94
Part 2 The Partnership Case Studies	95
Case Study 1 Capricorn-Sagittarius partnership	96
Case Study 2 Cancer-Aquarius partnership	108
Case Study 3 Aries-Gemini partnership	117
Case Study 4 Virgo-Leo partnership	128
Case Study 5 Libra-Taurus partnership	137
Case Study 6 Pisces-Scorpio partnership	146
CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS OF ACTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF CROSS CASE STUDIES THEMES	154
Part 1 Overview of the Partnership Strategy	154
Part 2 Why things happened as they did	158
(i) Assumptions and outcome	159
(ii) Inconsistencies and lack of clarity	160
(iii) Monitoring, evaluating and holding to account	162
(iv) Leadership and partnership	164
Part 3 Models and Typologies	166
Section 1 The Dependence-Independence-Interdependence model	168
Section 2 The Structure and Process Model	172
Section 3 The Experience of Partnership Openness to Partnership Model	174
Section 4 Situational Partnership	177

Section 5 A Typology of Partnerships	182
CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	185
The contribution of this research has made to knowledge	189
The influence of my research on my professional development	192
Closing comments	195
Bibliography	197
Tables	
Table 1a Partnership Schools' Data (i)	20
Table 1b Partnership Schools' Data (ii)	21
Table 2 Pattern of interviews and meetings	66
Table 3a Stages of development and Research Questions: LEA	83
Table 4 Natural and Arranged Partnerships	86
Table 5a Beliefs and Assumptions shared by the Astrologers	89
Table 5b Inconsistencies between the views of Astrologers	89
Table 3b Stages of Development and Research Questions: Schools	95
Table 6 Assumptions and Outcomes	159-60
Table 7 Inconsistencies and lack of clarity	161-2
Table 8 Dependent-independent-interdependent	170
Table 9 Processes and Structures	173
Table 10 Experience of and Openness to Partnership	176
Table 11 Positive/reluctant matrix	178
Table 12 Preferred Partners	181
Table 13 Partnership Typology	182-3
Table 14 Partnerships located in Typology	183
Table 15 Characteristics of Effective Partnerships	187
Table 16 Characteristics of Ineffective Partnerships	188
Appendices	
Appendix 1 Interview: Head of the Advisory and Inspection Service	212
Appendix 2 Interview: Headteacher effective school	220
Appendix 3 Interview: Headteacher School Causing Concern	227
Appendix 4 Email conversations: School Link Advisers	232
Appendix 5 Capricorn and Sagittarius: Twinning Development and Action Plan	238
Appendix 6 Cancer and Aquarius: Partnership Activities	244
Appendix 7 Cancer and Aquarius: Partnership Evaluation	247

Appendix 8 The Cancer School: Improvement Plan 2002/3	249
Appendix 9 Virgo and Leo: Partnership Agreement	252
Appendix 10 Virgo and Leo: Joint Senior Management Meetings	259
Appendix 11 Virgo and Leo: Action Plan	263
Appendix 12 Virgo and Leo: Science Exchange	269
Appendix 13 Virgo and Leo: Transition Project	276
Appendix 14 Aries and Gemini: Partnership Plan	279
Appendix 15 Libra and Taurus: Twinning Partnership	284
Appendix 16 'How are they now?'	291

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the following individuals; without their support, interest and encouragement this thesis would not have been possible.

To my supervisor, Pam Sammons, I owe a particular debt of gratitude for her encouragement, understanding, valuable advice and scholarly guidance.

To those who gave up their time to be interviewed as part of this research; without them this would not have been data to analyse.

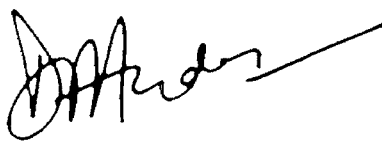
To my friends, colleague advisers and in particular Nick Boddington who gave generously of his time to support and challenge.

Finally, to my wife Andy and daughters Lucy and Amy who gave their love, patience, understanding and encouragement.

DECLARATION OF WORD LENGTH

I hereby declare that except where explicit attributions is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count (exclusive of appendices, lists of references and bibliographies but including footnotes, glossary and tables): 49,867 words.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Anderson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David A. Anderson

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This brief statement outlines my reasons for enrolling on the EdD programme, identifies the links between the modules of the programme and indicates how the programme has contributed to my professional development and practice.

I often reflect on the old adage that seeing much, suffering much and studying much, are the three pillars of 'wisdom.' Throughout my career, I had certainly seen and suffered and at particular key points of transition, challenge and change, I sought if not to bring wisdom, at least to bring understanding and learning to my professional role through a structured approach to academic study. In 1981, in preparation for promotion to senior management, I completed my MA in Education Organisation and Administration; in 1996 as a serving headteacher, I completed my MSc in Education Management. Here my interest in leadership and management and School Effectiveness and School Improvement (SESI) research began to grow and I wrote my dissertation on The Tilbury Initiative, a case study of school improvement. In 1997, when I moved from headship into advisory and inspection, I felt the need to study further; I also believed that my contribution to the education service would benefit from study at doctoral level. I started the EdD with knowledge and experience of headship in schools in challenging circumstances but lacked recent and relevant academic study in the field of school improvement and so identified studies in SESI as my specialist area within the EdD.

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS OF MY LEARNING EXPERIENCE OVER THE PROGRAMME AS A WHOLE.

I experienced a steep learning curve from the outset which continued through Methods of Enquiry, Advanced Research Methods and my specialist field of SESI. I

enjoyed engaging with the element on Professionalism which helped me reflect on my developing role within the Advisory and Inspection Service (AIS) and in particular working with the headteachers who had previously been my colleagues. Although I have completed two Masters Degrees, I was aware that through the EdD I was engaging in a programme that would require new skills and in depth knowledge of SESI. I see this engagement as a journey of investigation which has combined new learning about my developing role as an adviser and many years of experience of schools, with academic study at a significantly higher level.

Over the programme, I have built up a range of skills and approaches to learning. I have written in different styles for the various readers of my assignments, the institutional focused study (IFS) and the thesis. In addition I have applied my knowledge to my ways of working with schools as well as writing articles for Professional Development Today and the CSCS Journal. In addition I have made presentations to new headteachers on professional dialogue and the learning conversation, to advisory colleagues on SESI research and most recently to visiting Icelandic headteachers on partnership and collaboration.

My studies and my work in the LEA have been closely interlinked with the result that theory and practice have been welded together. The experience gained has assisted me in making judgements about the impact of initiatives, writing clearer and more reasoned reports and giving feed back about capacity and strategies for further improvement. At times the demands of my role with the LEA have detracted from the time that I wanted to make available for study. I was able to meet the deadlines for assignments and IFS but actions and decisions made by my LEA affected the progress of my thesis and along with some personal issues, resulted in completion being delayed. Nevertheless, I am pleased with the eventual outcomes.

Through my IFS and the research for my thesis, I engaged in insider research and become aware of the need to negotiate confidentiality and the relationship that exists between researcher and interviewee. The ethical dimensions of the research became clear as I engaged with others, analysed their actions and drew conclusions about their behaviours and practices. This heightened my awareness for the need to respect the rights and views of others as well as understanding and appreciating my own beliefs and values. I have been committed to ensuring that my evidence is robust and verifiable and that the conclusions drawn through the analyses are trustworthy. Through engaging in the research process I believe I have changed personally and professionally; my actions and judgements have altered as a consequence of these changes in my perceptions. These are major issues that I am still exploring particularly as I have recently left the LEA and work now as an independent adviser and consultant.

I recognise that the knowledge which has formed the basis of my expertise and shaped my developing role has not always been totally secure. Like all knowledge it is located within a particular paradigm which provides its own mental map and vantage point from which to view the world. I have become more aware of how and why headteachers, advisers and officers operate, particularly in relation to local and national imperatives and improvement initiatives.

In terms of my approaches to learning, the programme has encouraged me to be a participant in my own learning. In particular I have gained insights from the literature on reflective practice; I have sought to develop a more self-critical approach and as a result am better able to face the limitations of my own views. To further encourage this approach in my day to day work, I have established a 'peer support network' with a group of adviser colleagues as advocated by Hobson *et al.* (2003) and

have engaged with a particular 'critical friend' (MacBeath 1998 p.8), a trained coach. I have felt the power of this engagement and in particular the coaching relationship which has not only provided the opportunity for reflective thinking (Kanter 1977) but also helped sustain the energy needed to complete this thesis.

THE LINKS BETWEEN THE ELEMENTS

Over the past 9 years, my EdD studies have been a unifying feature to my work as a headteacher and an adviser and inspector with the LEA¹. Each role has contributed to my EdD programme and my studies have contributed to my professional work. A key feature of the programme has been the way each module has been grounded in my professional work and I have brought insights from the different aspects of my work to my studies. This has encouraged me to come up with alternative insights to make sense of my experiences.

I have also benefited from being able to appreciate how the elements of the programme have prepared me to undertake my final thesis, in particular the modules on research methods, professionalism and my IFS. The IFS developed out of my area of specialist study and helped ground my research in the SESI tradition. The research for my thesis has been the culmination of learning from the previous elements in the programme and a natural progression from the IFS however, the thesis has been more demanding in terms of the breadth and complexity of the field of study.

As a student I was able to feel part of the research community, to be able to engage in dialogue with lecturers, researchers and colleagues, albeit on a part time basis. The scope of my studies has been broadened beyond my personal practice and kept me in touch with the wider educational agenda.

¹ I had headships in two SCC. In one, I worked in partnership with the LEA in the Tilbury Initiative in response to the HMI Report 'Access and achievement in Urban Schools (1992). In the other, I successfully brought the school out of special measures. I had a one year secondment to work with The Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools before becoming an adviser with the LEA, working particularly with those on the Register of Schools Causing Concern.

HOW THE PROGRAMME HAS CONTRIBUTED TO MY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE

Throughout my engagement with the programme I believe my professional life has developed and I have been able to apply my learning broadly. Two golden threads have run through much of my work and research. The first has been my consuming interest in the impact of Ofsted Inspection, league tables and the policy of ‘naming and shaming,’ particularly on those schools in the most vulnerable and challenging situations. This is dear to my heart; as headteacher, I lived through, suffered and learned from that experience. As an adviser I worked to support schools, particularly those challenged by being placed in a category; as an Inspector, I also carried out inspections of schools. The EdD programme has helped me understand the impact inspection can have and better know how to support schools through the process and respond to the outcomes. The second thread is closely intertwined with the first and is about the power, possibility and potency of collaboration and partnership. The EdD programme has reinforced my view that partnership can help tackle some of the barriers to improvement and build relationships to sustain growth; this has shaped how I work and encourage others to work. In particular, through my thesis which sought to explore an unusual field of partnership activity, I have become somewhat of an ‘expert’ and broken new ground in several ways. The programme overall has extended my understanding of the culture of the AIS; the relationship between Local and Central Government, the relationships within and between schools and what it means to be a researcher in this field. I have been challenged to undertake insider research and to adopt research methods which generate robust data whilst maintaining an ethical approach.

An examination of how partnership working has been utilised as a strategy for improving SCC has enabled me to develop models and typologies that may secure better working in the future. I recognise, however that as a researcher and a professional I have limited influence on shaping how partnership and collaboration may be better used, nevertheless in my work as a SIP in several Local Authorities, I may be part of a wider effort to do so. My studies have enabled me to become aware of the views, motivations and concerns that different stakeholders and participants hold when engaging in partnership work. In particular the EdD programme has reinforced the view that there are 'no quick fixes' (Stoll and Fink 1998) for schools in challenging circumstances, though Central Government and Local Authorities may seek to find them and try to impose them. Furthermore such imposed reforms are likely to fail in the face of cultural resistance from those in the school (Mulford and Silins 2005). I have reflected how the worth of well meaning initiatives can be sabotaged, trivialised and lost when those involved play little more than lip service to the idea and the values and principles that underpin them.

As my research has developed, so have the relationships with my tutors and other students. In particular I have reflected on the research task and have recognised the importance of subjecting my interpretation to 'reflexive inter-subjective discourse' particularly with my supervisor (Winter 1987 p. 10). As my knowledge about the field of study has increased along with heightened awareness of my beliefs and values, my confidence has grown and I have taken more control over my own professional development. In particular I became acutely aware of the constraints of working within a predominantly reactive service and believe I now work more effectively as an independent consultant/adviser and enjoy the benefits that this freedom brings.

CONCLUSION

My view of the AIS, the way it engages with schools and my part within it has changed as I have participated in the programme and particularly as I have undertaken the research for my IFS and thesis. Through the research process my understanding has deepened and I have sought to change my practice and the way I relate to schools particularly those causing concern in challenging circumstances. As O'Hanlon (1994 p.282) suggests, it is this change of practice that has made the programme educational for me.

I have sought to realise the implications of my research in my work. I have been provided with a frame of reference for personal reflection to better understand myself, my professional relationship with others and also how they relate to each other. I have appreciated how questioning experience brings an element of freedom from accepted assumptions. In so doing I have become more aware of how actions are constrained and the moral and ethical dilemmas that we face in our work with improving schools.

The time for reflection and the opportunity to discuss with others has convinced me that reflexivity is essential to exercising professionalism in education. In my reading and reflection, I have thought about the new professionalism which involves being 'self-conscious about the need to create and recreate collaborative cultures and reflexive selves' (Quicke 2000 p.313). I believe my studies have helped me become a more reflexive and reflective practitioner, willing to tolerate ambiguity, able to use abstract concepts, more aware of dilemmas, tensions and contradictions; with a 'healthy' scepticism about the motives and intentions of others yet holding true to my values and principles. Such reflexive practice necessarily implies both self

critique and institutional critique; as Elliott (1990) points out 'one cannot have one without the other' (p.23).

In conclusion, my studies are best characterised as a journey, one of adventure and exploration. At the outset, I was not sure of the journey or the road I would travel; along the way I sometimes felt lost, confused and even unsure how to proceed. Sometimes I travelled alone, sometimes with colleagues and made great progress when guided by those who knew much more about the terrain. I experienced some great moments and insights through engagement with theory, dialogue and collaborative practice and the course has led me to a more profound understanding of my professional context. In recognition of the contribution others have made to my journey, I would add 'collaboration and partnership' as a forth pillar to the three referred to earlier.

It would be difficult to summarise my personal journey of discovery and conviction better than by quoting the observation of T.S. Eliott when he wrote, 'the end of our exploring will be to arrive where we began and to know the place for the first time.'

GLOSSARY

The following terms relate to the specific local education authority (LEA) in this research.

Term	Definition
AIS	Advisory and Inspection Service
AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSCS	The Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment; re-designated the Department of Education and Skills (DfES)
EDP	Education Development Plan- the strategic plan with priorities for school improvement, raising pupil achievement and increasing social inclusion.
FSM	Free School Meals. A measure of similar socio-economic context.
GM	Grant Maintained
GTS	Graduate Teacher Scheme
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HRO	High Reliability Organisations
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LEA	Local Education Authority-part of the elected council that fulfils the education responsibilities under the Education Acts.
LIG	Leadership Incentive Grant allocated to schools scoring under 50% 5A*-C; or over 35% FSM, or having been in an EAZ.
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education-the agency responsible to Parliament for the inspection of educational provision and LEAs in England and Wales.
PIC	Pre Inspection Commentary
SCC	Schools Causing Concern. Education Act 1997 defined schools not addressing their weaknesses adequately.
SCITT	School Centred Initial Teacher Training
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SLA	School Link Adviser
SDP	School Development Plan
SIP	School Improvement Partner in A New Relationship with Schools. DfES (2005)
SER	School Effectiveness Research
SMT	Senior Management Team
V/A	Value Added measures compare the relative progress made by pupils between key stages with progress made by schools nationally and by similar schools by prior attainment and free school meals.

CHAPTER 1 SETTING THE SCENE

There is nothing particularly new about partnership; schools have long engaged in various forms of partnership, collaboration and networking, however as a policy strategy it is relatively recent (Crozier 1998). The notion of partnering or twinning 'effective' schools with 'less effective' schools presented a new form of collaboration as it became part of the Government reform and improvement agenda in March 2000 when the Secretary of State announced that schools in England attaining 25% or less 5 A*-C at GCSE would be twinned with another school with a proven track record (DfEE 2000). Later, Schools Building on Success (DfEE 2001) suggested that schools facing challenging circumstances should look to those schools which although facing challenging circumstances themselves, have broken through the cycle of decline and low achievement to become very successful.

The improvement strategy that forms the focus of this study represents an LEA response to the collaboration agenda as it sought to partner a number of SCC with schools identified as more effective so they could work together to identify and address their needs. Within this approach, the LEAs role was to broker the partnership, provide funds to support collaboration, monitor progress and hold schools to account.

My research seeks to explore perceptions of the various impacts of this improvement strategy in particular on the headteachers and also on the schools involved. I intend to show that given the right conditions partnership can support the processes of improvement of SCC. Working in partnership is however far from straight forward; this field of study is highly complex given the intricate and often entangled nature of human relations within and between organisations operating in a partnership setting. In order to shed light on this complexity my research draws on a

range of theoretical frameworks and seeks to generate new models to capture the nuances and intricacies of partnership working.

(a) Background and context

LEAs have been in existence for almost one hundred years but debate continues about their functions and their future as they stand precariously between the increasing assertiveness of Central Government, the autonomy of successful schools and their ability to support and improve SCC. The Audit Commission (1999) states LEAs have therefore:

an opportunity to be grasped within the potential threat to their existence (p.2);

Woods and Cribb (2001) also point to the need for LEAs to:

restructure, refocus and re-culture their service to meet the challenging agenda (p.9).

Furthermore Woods and Cribb (ibid) highlight the difficulty of disentangling the impact of LEA support, as the prime responsibility for school improvement lies with the schools themselves. Although DfEE (2000) confirms the role of LEAs to provide administration functions, support at times of difficulty, broker partnerships and collaboration, the Ofsted & Audit Commission Report (2001) concludes that support for SCC is varied, generally sound for schools subject to special measures, but weak for one third of schools with serious weaknesses. Matthews and Sammons (2004 and 2005) also point out that schools in special measures are more likely to sustain improvement after inspection than those identified with serious weakness. This could be attributed to differences in pressure and support as special measures schools are closely monitored and guided by Ofsted, whereas schools with serious weakness rely on the LEA for such support; this is an issue that requires further investigation.

In response to such challenges, the LEA in this study partnered six of their most concerning secondary schools on the Register of SCC with six effective schools

to provide significant additional support for improvement. The partnership strategy set out in the Educational Development Plan (EDP) 2002-3 represents an attempt to demonstrate a new way of working to improve SCC.

The six partnerships are formed across a variety of locations; unsurprisingly all SCC are in challenging locations whereas it is interesting to note that most of the 'effective' schools in this study are in more favourable localities. At the outset therefore, the LEA strategy did not provide a partnership of equals nor did it identify partner schools that had succeeded while facing similar challenges (DfEE 2001). The signs of the Zodiac are used to identify the schools and ensure anonymity in this thesis. No behavioural characteristics ascribed to signs from the field of astrology play any part in naming the schools or analysing the partnerships, but their use serves as a reminder that partnerships have the potential to be 'marriages made in heaven' or 'pairings doomed to an unhappy relationship.'

The tables 1a & 1b (pp.20-21) provide data about relative size, context and performance of the schools and allow for some immediate comparisons to be made. The percentages of pupils eligible for FSM and identified as having some form of SEN are significantly higher in all SCC and attendance rates are significantly lower. Indeed none of the effective schools are above national average for FSM. The policy assumption that partner schools would be those that had broken through the cycle of decline and low achievement is open to question here as it did not inform selection in this case. Also of interest, is the finding that in a few categories, SCC perform as well as or better than some partners effective schools. The grades are in bold type and underlined in Table 1b (p.21) to highlight where The Aries School showed higher KS3 County average value added than its partner and The Libra School had higher Panda Grades at KS4 than its partner when compared with schools nationally.

Partnership Schools 2002

School	LEA Category	Ofsted Category	Size	% FSM	% SEN	Attendance
Capricorn	SCC*	Under-achieving	890	10% C	19% C	91% C
Sagittarius	Effective		1460	6% D	8% D	92% A
Cancer	SCC*	LEA identified	1010	14% C	23% B	88% E*
Aquarius	Effective		1050	7% D	21% C	91% C
Virgo	SCC*	LEA identified	380	7% D	40% A	92% B
Leo Technology College	Effective		1840	3% E	16% C	94% A
Aries	SCC*	Special Measures	970	31% B	34% B	88% E
Gemini Technology College	Effective		980	10% C	16% C	92% C
Libra	SCC*	Serious Weakness	1740	23% B	18% C	86% E
Taurus Specialist Sports	Effective		1380	7% C	22% C	91% C
Pisces	SCC*	Serious Weakness	750	22% C	36% A	88% E
Scorpio	Effective		1440	15% C	18% C	92% C

SCC*= School Causing Concern. SEN = Special Educational Needs. FSM = Free School Meals

Interpretation Grades:-

A* Very high in comparison with the national average or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the top 5% of schools.

A Well above the national average, or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the top quarter but not the top 5%.

B Above the national average, or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the top 40%, but not top quarter.

C Broadly in line with the national average, or the average for similar schools based on FSM.

D Below the national average or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the bottom 40%, but not bottom quarter.

E Well below the national average or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the bottom quarter but not the bottom 5%.

E* Very low in comparison with the national average or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the bottom 5%.

Table 1a Partnership schools data (i)

Partnership Schools 2002

School	Panda Grades KS3 compared with schools Nationally	Panda Grades at KS4 compared with schools Nationally	Panda Grades at KS3 compared with similar schools Nationally (FSM)	Panda Grades at KS4 compared with similar schools Nationally (FSM)	County Ave. KS3 Value Added	County Ave. KS4 Value Added
Capricorn	D	E	E	E	E*	E
Sagittarius	B	A	C	B	D	C
Cancer	D	E	E	<u>E</u>	E	E
Aquarius	B	B	D	E	A	C
Virgo	E	D	E*	E*	C	D
Leo Technology College	A	A	A	A	A	A
Aries	E*	E*	E*	E*	<u>D</u>	E*
Gemini Technology College	C	C	D	C	E	D
Libra	E	E	<u>E</u>	<u>D</u>	E	E
Taurus Specialist Sports	C	C	E	E	B	A
Pisces	E	E	E	E	E	E
Scorpio	C	C	C	C	C	A

N.B. Where SCC grades are equal to or better than partner schools they appear in **bold** and are **underlined**.

Interpretation Grades:-

A* Very high in comparison with the national average or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the top 5% of schools.

A Well above the national average, or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the top quarter but not the top 5%.

B Above the national average, or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the top 40%, but not top quarter.

C Broadly in line with the national average, or the average for similar schools based on FSM.

D Below the national average or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the bottom 40%, but not bottom quarter.

E Well below the national average or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the bottom quarter but not the bottom 5%.

E* Very low in comparison with the national average or the average for similar schools based on FSM. Results are within the bottom 5%.

Table 1b Partnership Schools' Data (ii)

(b) Rationale for the thesis

The Government reform agenda of the past decade or more can be characterised by the application of national strategies based on ‘outside-in’ solutions and the external accountability of inspection and measures of school performance. Bentley (2003) argues that such strategies have not brought improvement or built capacity in all schools as they are insufficiently sensitive to the unique challenges and circumstances of some schools. He characterises the current ‘collaborative’ agenda as seeking to create a new system driven by the energy of the schools and fuelled by the expertise of practitioners; where partnership generates the energy for improvement as schools maintain ownership and strengthen their ability to self-manage (p.2).

Over time the principles of partnership, collaboration and the practitioner expertise have underpinned a number of initiatives from Beacon, Specialist and Leading Edge Schools to Education Action Zones, Excellence Clusters and LIG Collaboratives and led to the growth of ‘consultant leaders’ and Network Learning through the NCSL, the leadership strategy of London Challenge and the National Primary Strategy. Bentley (ibid) points to the need to look carefully at such a reform agenda as it depends upon both building collaborative capacity between schools and within schools and as yet there is relatively little research and no agreement about the effectiveness of collaborative strategies in raising standards. Although Harris (2002 p.102) suggests partnership and collaboration can help teachers improve practice as they create the opportunity to work together and learn from each other, Fullan (2001) asserts that schools are indeed ‘terrible at learning from each other’ (p.92). Others are concerned that self-identified solutions between partners may not challenge the institutional norms that are part of the problem (Anderson 1998 p.571) and Datnow (1999 p.250) identifies the preference of schools to choose strategies that fit rather

than challenge current practice. Hatch (1998 p.250) also notes that schools may indeed waste their time reinventing previously invented wheels. These doubts provide an important backdrop for the LEA's decision to engage in the partnership initiative as a strategy to engender improvement in the some of its most concerning schools.

(c) Overview of partnership working

Although partnership is advocated as a strategy for improving schools, the literature to guide such development is limited (Crozier 1998 p.251). My interest in the significance of partnership working stems from my involvement in the Tilbury Initiative 1992-7 which I studied as part of a Masters programme (Anderson 1996). While the idea of partnership is relatively easily understood there are considerable theoretical and practical complexities in understanding how those involved in a partnership should interact and the way any interaction might be expected to impact. Most of the published literature on partnership is context-specific and little is known about partnerships between SCC and effective schools. In addition, while the concept of partnership is intended to be essentially positive, partnerships can be found along a continuum from productive long lasting harmonious unions to relationships that are short lived, fraught with difficulties and deceit; leading to eventual and acrimonious breakdown. Indeed the literature more readily identifies the tensions that can arise within partnership when autonomy is constrained and expectations are at variance rather than collaborative improvement (Timperley and Robinson 2003 p.252). Watson and Fullan (1992) also warn that:

strong partnerships will not happen by accident, good will or ad hoc projects (p.96)

For partnerships to be effective, Fullan (2001) also argues:

both parties must work hard at working together, forging new structures, respecting each others' cultures and using shared experiences to problem-solve (p.96)

It will be important to seek evidence of such behaviours in studying this partnership initiative for improving SCC.

(d) Research questions

This study is concerned to find out how partnership with a school deemed by the LEA to be more effective impacts on schools identified as causing concern and explores the understandings and beliefs of those involved.

The overarching research question asks:

- How do partnerships between SCC and ‘effective’ schools evolve and support (or hinder) improvement?

The capacity of the SCC to engage and the capability of the effective school to facilitate new approaches or transfer effective systems and practices from their own school to another institution and context are central issues for the investigation.

Burton and Brundrett (2002) in their study of Beacon Schools report extensively on the practice of the Beacon Schools themselves but say little about what actually transfers and impacts on the schools they engage with as part of their beacon activities. Hargreaves (1998) warns that the notion of transfer of learning by simply passing knowledge from one school to another school for implementation is indeed a discredited linear model for learning (p.46). In the light of this the second research question asks:

- Do systems and practices transfer and what impact (if any) of the partnership activities can be seen in SCC and their partner effective schools?

Recent years have also seen a considerable increase in opportunities for serving headteachers to undertake advisory, consultancy and school improvement work to support other schools (Flintham 2004; Hartle 2005). The DfES White Paper (October 2005) seeks to ensure the most successful school leaders support the less successful

schools through:

growth in federations and other partnership arrangements (8.25).

This study has a particular focus on the relationships that develop between the headteachers themselves and may give an early indication of the likely impact of partnership and collaboration in SCC.

The DfEE (2001) report suggests LEAs are well placed to play a leading role in identifying and brokering the 'right' partnerships. While there is a fair degree of ambivalence amongst schools regarding their attitude towards LEAs, the facilitative approach is frequently highlighted as a key role for supporting schools (Derrington 2000 cited in Lownsbrough and Huber 2003). The research therefore asks:

- How effective is the LEA at matching schools and brokering partnerships that support improvement in SCC?

Much of the literature relating to improvement strategies makes a distinction between those initiated 'top down' and those that are 'bottom up,' where schools have ownership from the start. Hopkins *et al.* (1994) suggests a broad categorisation that delineates improvement projects as organic, within which schools are likely to flourish, or mechanistic, with direct guidelines and prescriptive strategies. There is a perception that 'bottom up' strategies based on organic growth and self renewal will work more effectively than those ordered into existence from a higher level (DEMOS 2003) although as yet there is little evidence to support this hypothesis. Gray (2000 p.9) suggests that school improvement researchers tend to assume that if the general conditions for change and improvement can be generated 'bottom-up,' the strategies for improvement will follow, whereas policy makers believe that focusing on the concerns and getting the school back on track (top-down) will engender responsiveness towards improvement. Gray (*ibid*) asserts that 'change makers' try to

bridge the gap between the two and build on both; this has particular relevance to the partnership strategy that forms the focus of this thesis as the initiative represents an attempt to both help create the conditions for change, and secure a coherent strategy to build the capacity of SCC. Harris (2002) also suggests that the external change agent can contribute directly to capacity-building and change (p.57). The research therefore asks:

- How far this initiative manages to integrate a ‘top down’ approach with ‘inside out’ development, and seeks to find out what part the effective head and/or the LEA Link School Adviser (LSA) play as possible agents of change?

(e) Relevance of the thesis

This research is relevant to those involved in school effectiveness and improvement and those who work in and with SCC. It seeks to explore the various impacts of partnership and provide a critique of approaches intended to foster effective ways of working with schools in difficult and challenging situations. The study is relevant to other SCC as they seek to manage offers of support and are encouraged to form partnerships with other schools. Here the work of Beacon, Specialist and Leading Edge Schools is important as they are charged with the task of sharing and spreading good practice (DfEE 1999). This research will help those in effective schools understand partnership from the perspective of the receiving school and provide evidence citing both benefits and difficulties that may be experienced. Through publication and school improvement networks the study will also disseminate the findings to inform those developing models for improvement.

The research will look at conditions needed for partnerships to grow and reveal both possibilities and limitations through a critique and analysis of different sources of data that reveal participants’ experiences and perspectives. Although there

is a gap of several years since the completion of the data collection, publication of the findings is timely as 'A New Relationship with schools: Next Steps (DfES 2005) introduced the School Improvement Partner (SIP) to act as critical professional friend and build stronger local capacity for school improvement (p.5). In the secondary phase, the majority of SIPs are experienced headteachers and the LEA has the responsibility to select, allocate, broker and manage these new partnerships. The research also has implications for the current interest in consultant leaders and other roles for more experienced and successful headteachers.

(f) Professional context

As the LEA Adviser required to 'monitor and evaluate' the strategy, this research provided me with the opportunity to examine partnership within a variety of conceptual frameworks. I built on my previous research and extended my knowledge and understanding of strategies to support SCC. This is particularly important as the LEA seeks to reposition within the complex interrelationship of Central Government, Local Government and schools; where improvement is aligned with practitioner knowledge and collaboration between schools and LEAs increasingly become commissioners rather than providers of services (DfES 2005). In addition the research has afforded me time to reflect on my own role as School Adviser; required to monitor and evaluate a 'top down' initiative in an environment where the emphasis is placed on short term 'fixes' and knee jerk responses.

(g) Structure of the thesis

Following this scene setting chapter I will:

- i) provide an overview of the relevant literature in Chapter 2;
- ii) explore the methodology which has provided the framework for the thesis in Chapter 3;

- iii) provide an analysis of the various sets of data and interpret the case study findings in relation to the research questions in Chapter 4;
- iv) offer an overview of partnership strategy and the development of models and typologies in Chapter 5 and in
- v) Chapter 6 outline the new contribution to knowledge and highlight implications for further research and the development of School Effectiveness policy and practice.

The research goes beyond descriptive case studies of participant interaction in a unique context. My study has significance as it seeks to use a comprehensive theoretical framework to illuminate the complexity of the field and generate models to help understanding and develop more effective approaches to partnership and collaboration. A running theme in the research concerns assumptions about 'what works,' the scant regard paid by the LEA to School Effectiveness and School Improvement research and the brokering of partnerships which may constrain rather than support improvement. I have derived much benefit and insight from the data collection and analysis and this, together with the writing of the thesis, has interacted significantly with my professional work.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to create a perspective to understand my research question of how partnership between SCC and schools identified as effective worked out in practice and whether it did as intended, I here examine and discuss relevant School Effectiveness Research (SER) and School Improvement literature. I lace this review through with further questions and issues that arise for the partnership strategy and address these later in the analysis in chapter 4.

The study of failing schools and SCC has not always featured greatly in educational research in this country. For over two decades SER in the U.K. and the United States preferred to study effective schools. Such studies sought to disentangle the complexity of what went on in those schools, how to measure effectiveness and on what basis to judge effectiveness. Empirical studies on school effectiveness also established that schools can and do make a real difference to pupils' achievement. This contradicted the studies of Coleman *et al.* (1966), Bernstein (1968) and Jencks *et al.* (1972) which had generated a rather pessimistic view of school playing only a minor role in counteracting the influence of social class and family background (Mortimore 1995; Silisers and Boshier 1997; Teddlie and Reynolds 2000).

(a) Characteristics of Effective Schools

Over time, considerable agreement emerged around the key characteristics of effective schools. Research such as the Fifteen Thousand Hours study (Rutter *et al.* 1979) gave prominence to the concept of school ethos and identified important 'within school' factors associated with high levels of school effectiveness. These factors include the balance of intellectually able and less able children, the system of reward, the physical environment, the opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility, the use of homework, good classroom management, democratic

decision making and strong leadership from the headteacher. Academic outcomes are not the only measure of effectiveness and other factors such as rates of attendance and levels of students' behaviour problems were also incorporated. The Reynolds studies (1976 and 1982) further reveal a number of factors associated with more effective regimes. These include a high proportion of pupils in positions of responsibility, positive academic expectations and low levels of institutional control and coercive management.

In the 1980s the development of more sophisticated multilevel statistical procedures identified schools that are effective both academically and socially (e.g. Mortimore *et al.* 1988; Smith and Tomlinson 1989). These schools are shown to possess characteristics such as purposeful leadership both from head and senior staff, staff involvement in decision making, intellectually challenging teachers, a positive climate and good parental involvement. This work was followed by a range of studies investigating both school and departmental effects (e.g. Nuttall *et al.* 1989; Fitz-Gibbon 1992). The review of 160 studies carried out by Sammons *et al.* (1995 p.8) summarises the most common characteristics in a list of eleven factors that characterise the effective school. In addition to characteristics already noted, emphasis is placed on teaching and learning, raising achievement, monitoring progress and the school as a learning organisation. Mortimore (1995) stresses however that these factors alone, should not be taken as a blueprint for effectiveness. He argues that although they have been conclusively proved to be essential, the critical factor is how they are enacted and that varies between schools.

The literature on SER, further evidenced by the wide ranging review of Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) developed factors that describe the effective school and provide characteristics for effective schooling that schools could consider or even

aspire to. As such features are amenable to improvement, it was suggested that schools may become more effective by the concerted action of the school staff (Creemers 1994). However, Harris (2002 p.4) emphasizes that school improvement can only occur when schools apply those strategies that best fit their own context and particular developmental needs. The strategy of partnering effective schools with SCC however is founded on the implicit belief that processes and practices that support the creation of the effective factors maybe transferable; that SCC can observe effective practices and apply or adapted them for themselves.

In recent times there have been many critics of SER (Townsend 2001). Thrupp (1999a) and Slee *et al.* (1998) in particular contend that SER has become socially and politically de-contextualised, unable to control political use of its findings to support educational reform programmes and in particular:

accepting a too-narrow view of what student outcomes are important (Townsend 2001 p.115).

Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) accept there are some flaws and limitations within the research tradition which they characterise as essentially normative, based on assumptions about schools as rational goal oriented systems, where goals are measurable in pupil achievement; thereby neglecting process, culture and contextual dimensions. They accept that studies tend to offer a 'snapshot' of a school at a particular time rather than a moving picture. Gray *et al.* (1996b) also questions the usefulness of the 'snapshot' given the dynamic and evolving nature of schools. Reynolds (1995) expresses his concern that school effectiveness creates a widespread and popular view that schools do not just make a difference but they make all the difference (p.59). The emphasis placed on defining the characteristics of school effectiveness tends to generate a 'deficit model' of the ineffective or 'failing' school by establishing not only what it lacks but also what it needs to enact to become

effective and by implication blaming the school and the teachers (Elliott 1996). The factors that characterise the effective school however, do not in themselves provide strategies for achieving effectiveness, based as they are on schools that are already effective. Furthermore it is not clear which of the factors of effectiveness are the results of effectiveness rather than the cause and whether factors which identify schools as effective are the factors necessary to get ineffective schools to become effective. In addition, Barth (1990) is concerned that school effectiveness appears driven by 'list logic' (p.37) which can cause others to feel:

overwhelmed, insulted and inadequate (p.37).

While he accepts that lists of effective factors make a valuable contribution, in themselves they do not provide:

'building blocks to school improvement' (p.39).

Some factors indeed appear as self-evident truths about teaching and learning; the need for 'an orderly atmosphere' for example, provides a catch all for the many variables that exist within teaching and learning in the classroom. The challenge for all teachers, not least those working in SCC is how to achieve and maintain an orderly atmosphere. Neither acknowledging the need for an orderly atmosphere, nor observing others working in an orderly atmosphere, necessarily provide strategies for achieving order in different and more challenging contexts. Thrupp (2001 p.35) indeed notes the attempts of SER (e.g. Mortmore and Whitty 1997; Stoll and Myers 1998) to connect with sociological and policy concerns and the context of schooling, at the same time however attention remains focused on 'in school' factors that contribute to ineffectiveness (e.g. Stoll and Fink 1998). Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) in their review of research in the field, conclude that the majority of school reforms now assume the importance of the school effects dimensions. In a robust defence of

SER, Teddlie and Reynolds (2001) point to the rapid advances made through an international focus and a positivist methodology that addresses problems that need solution, rather than merely 'problematizing problems' (p.100).

Currently, SCC are regularly monitored by Ofsted (2004a) and LEA Officers; they are made more aware of the areas for improvement through Ofsted Reports and LEA Reviews. What are less clear are the strategies and actions to address the issues. This raises questions about the capacity of the SCC to improve and the capability of the effective school, working in partnership, to shed light on how to become effective in significantly more challenging situations. Indeed the characteristics for effective schools (Sammons *et al.* 1995 p.8) do not include the ability to work collaboratively with other schools. This is perhaps unsurprising as collaboration was rarely adopted as a strategy for improving schools prior to 2000.

Instead of generating a deficit model of what ineffective schools fail to do, Reynolds (1996 cited in Stoll and Myers 1998) suggests that it is more productive to see them as having characteristics particular to them; characteristics not necessarily seen in the effective schools (p.164). In a review of the characteristics of ineffective schools, Stoll and Fink (1996) highlight, lack of vision, unfocussed leadership, dysfunctional staff relationships and ineffective classroom practices. Furthermore, Reynolds (op cit) points to schools that do not simply have the absence of strong purposeful leadership but indeed evidence fragmented, confused and inconsistent leadership. The ability to recognise professional leadership in the effective partner school however, does not necessarily bring the SCC any nearer achieving 'professional leadership.' Myers (1996 p.9) also refers to 'antithetical' characteristics and points out that the presence of effective characteristics per se, does not guarantee a school is effective. She further argues for the need to know more about how

characteristics interact before the school is judged as effective. This has significance when assessing the school's capacity for change (Stoll and Myers 1998) and may give direction to the help and support for SCC. Harris (2002 p.2) asserts that:

capacity building is concerned with creating the conditions,
opportunities and experiences for development of mutual learning (p.2)

Clearly this has implications for identifying and selecting the effective partner schools.

(b) Capacity for change

In contrast to the school effectiveness field, school improvement research concentrates on the cultural dimensions of schooling (Hopkins *et al.* 1996). Here attention is focused on how schools change and the improvement strategies necessary to achieve such change (Fullan 1992). Process measures are the centre of attention rather than achievement outcomes; the school is the centre of change and teachers are intrinsic within the process. Successful school improvement involves building capacity for change at both the school and the classroom level (Ainscow *et al.* 1994; Fullan 1991). Hopkins *et al.* (1994) defines school improvement as:

an approach to educational change that has the twin purposes
of enhancing student achievement and strengthening the
school's capacity for change (p.64)

Sergiovanni (2000) further points to how:

continuous capacity building is best done within communities
in practice (p.140).

Stoll (1999) defines the schools internal capacity as:

the power to engage in and sustain continuous learning of
teachers and the school itself for the purpose of enhancing
student learning (p.506)

Stoll (*ibid*) suggests three key influences on the internal capacity are seen at the individual teacher level, the school's social and structural learning context, and the

external context. Barber and Dann (1996 p.22) assert that a successful school requires a 'learning staff' and Joyce *et al.* (1999) identify good staff development as a key factor in school improvement. Senge (1990) also stresses the importance of team learning and the process of:

aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results they desire' (p.236)

Determining the individual patterns of influence is essential to understanding the school's internal capacity and this indicates the readiness of the school to change. Lodge (1998) also notes that discussions about ineffective or failing schools tend to lump schools together as one type of school, without consideration of their different characteristics. Myers and Goldstein (1998) stress the uniqueness of each 'troubled' school and assert that there is:

no magic or simple solution to their difficulties as they need different types of support (p.157)

Hopkins and Harris (1997 p.8 cited in Harris 2002) also highlight the need for a fit between programmes and the development needs of the school. The capacity of the SCC to change, the appropriateness of partnership for all SCC and the choice of partner are all critical factors in this improvement initiative.

Based largely on his experiences of attempted interventions in schools experiencing difficulties and schools in special measures, Reynolds (1998 p.165) summarises the characteristics that may limit capacity for improvement in failing schools. These include reluctance of staff to try new things and stick to past methods for fear of failing. He describes the tendency of staff to blame external factors for the failure of the school, the belief that outsiders have little to contribute and the presence of numerous personality clashes, dysfunctional relationships and an inability or unwillingness to address underlying problems. The success of partnership depends on

those involved being able to work together to identify and deal with the problems and not add to them. Furthermore, Reynolds (2004 p.2) draws on the work of Stringfield (1998) to characterise 'Highly Reliable Organisations (HROs)' and highlights the factors affecting the reliability of improvement strategies and how their absence makes the success of interventions highly unlikely. Contrary to the behaviours of HROs, the LEA's partnership strategy assumes SCC have the internal capacity to engage in partnership and partner schools have the internal and external capacity to drive their improvement.

Within the literature schools have been usefully characterised in a variety of ways: -

- Stoll and Fink (1996 p.98) identify the 'cruising' school. Here the school may 'appear' to be doing well due to a carefully constructed camouflage but they are resting on their laurels- until inspection tells a different story.
- The 'swaying school' (Myers 1998 p.179) where it is 'touch and go' whether the school will survive, let alone improve. There is considerable staff turnover and morale wavers between enthusiasm and dejection.
- Myers and Goldstein (cited in Myers op cit p.179) characterise the 'sliding school;' fixed in a never-ending downward spiral, fuelled by low staff morale, significant staff turn over, cynicism about new initiatives and staff resistance to change, including the headteacher. Initiatives to improve are rarely carried through as staff constantly 'fire fight.'
- The 'sinking school' (Stoll and Fink 1996 p.86) where the staff are not prepared or able to change; isolated and blaming others for the situation.
- The 'stuck' school (Rosenholtz 1989 p.106) where expectations are very low and external conditions are blamed for the situation.

- More optimistically Myers (op cit p.178) identifies the 'striving' school; here staff work with the headteacher and are determined to improve and confirm the Ofsted judgements wrong.

In this research I will seek to characterise 'partnerships' and explore the usefulness of generating a typology for partnership.

(c) Relative effectiveness and transferability

While attempts to identify schools in terms of 'effectiveness' characteristics may be useful in categorising schools, it is further complicated by the notion of 'relative' effectiveness and internal variation or 'differential' effectiveness. Even highly effective schools are likely to have some teachers or subject areas that are less effective. Myers and Goldstein (op cit p.175) suggest that most schools are likely to be failing some of their students some of the time. The notion of 'differential effectiveness' (Stoll and Fink 1996 p.35) is crucial here as it emphasises that schools in the failing category may have effective individuals and effective departments. Reynolds (1998) also highlights the major differences in pupil achievement and ways of working within schools as well as between schools. He argues that the existence of the range of capability within schools indicates the potential to facilitate self-improvement provided use can be made of the variation. This is underlined by Sammons *et al.* (1997) in an analysis of comparative effectiveness in both schools and departments which shows that schools are unlikely to be equally successful across subject departments and may vary in their impact for different pupil groups. A case study by Haydn (2001) describes how the spectacular performance of one department in a highly disadvantaged school on the verge of being placed in special measures led the way to overall school improvement, which has been sustained over ten years. Within the SCC therefore there are likely to be departments and individuals who

know what to do to raise achievement and may be better placed to support improvement than those in the effective partner school.

The issue about the potential of transferability of practice between schools is again relevant, as transferability between effective and less effective departments in the same school is far from straightforward. This raises the possibility that SCC may more readily develop the capacity to self-improve by building on areas of expertise already within the school rather than observing expertise within an effective partner school.

The rhetoric of partnership embraces the possibility of two-way transfer of knowledge and practice between schools. Hargreaves (1998 pp.46-47) points out that the transfer of knowledge between teachers is far more than simply telling or providing information. Transfer, he suggests, occurs only when the knowledge from one teacher is converted into the practice of the other teacher; from one person's practice into another's know how. The conversion of abstract information into applicable know how is a complex process of tinkering, testing and modifying to fit a different context. In terms of 'two way transfer,' it may be hypothesised that the SCC by definition has limited capacity to convert abstract information whereas the effective partner is likely to have the capacity to more readily learn and adapt their practice. There is indeed much for the effective partner to learn as regular monitoring by Ofsted/HMI can lead SCC to develop systems and practices that are more rigorous than schools not subject to such regular scrutiny (Ofsted 2003 p.169). Indeed Matthews and Sammons (2004 p.38) present evidence that the engagement with HMI in special measures schools appears to build greater capacity to improve and sustain improvement and promotes improvement strategies to raise attainment and reduce the percentage of lessons judged as unsatisfactory. Furthermore, Matthews and Sammons

(2005) identify the relative ineffectiveness of schools with serious weakness and argue for closer monitoring and support as they may:

lack the capacity to be self-critical and appropriate leadership to sustain the drive for self-improvement (p.160).

While the partnership strategy is essentially about improving SCC, it may be that effective schools are likely to be able to transfer and apply what they have learned. Once the SCC can improve in some areas however, there is the potential to become effective in more and improve even without the partnership (Haydn, op cit). Indeed SCC need to convince HMI that they have the internal capacity to continue to improve without the involvement of an effective partner (Ofsted 2003 pp.160-164).

(d) Labelling schools

Public naming is seen by some to be a necessary stimulus for improvement, others believe it is not supportive and has the effect of lowering morale, exacerbating difficulties and obscuring positive aspects (Mortimore and Whitty 1997; Myers and Goldstein 1998). Although Barber (1998 p.21) suggests that the pressure that results from being found to be failing may provide the turning point for some schools, he accepts that it could simply reinforce a school's incapacity. Furthermore Stark (1998 p.35) argues that although traumatic for its staff:

public identification of unacceptable standards tends to speed rather than delay recovery and indeed is often a precondition for it.

While the partnership strategy may aid recovery it may also further underline the image of the SCC as failing to deal effectively with its own issues and thus lower morale and exacerbate existing problems; hindering rather than helping recovery.

Gray (2000 p.50) identifies the acceptance of improvement as the necessary first step for positive change. Fidler and Atton (1999) assert that although the stigma of being in a 'failing' category is undesirable:

the school may simply have lost the capacity to improve without a great deal of outside assistance (p.46)

Matthews and Sammons' (2004 p.55) evaluation over ten years also note that the great majority of schools identified as special measures have improved since their previous inspection and see it as a lever for change. They point out however that improvement 'through' inspection should not be misinterpreted as a claim of 'direct improvement by inspection.' The starting point for improvement for schools in special measures they suggest may involve a change in leadership and the special professional relationship that develops between the head teacher and the HMI. Such a relationship, founded on mutual trust, seeks to analyse the situation, evaluate progress and accelerate improvement. This research examines the LEAs ability to match schools and broker partnerships to support improvement; in particular it asks will such positive relationships develop between the heads in SCC (some with a change in headship and others not) and the partners chosen for them and will this help the school accept the need for change and build capacity for improvement?

For many schools the period following a 'critical' Ofsted Inspection and Report is characterised by staff feelings of bitterness, disillusionment and hopelessness (Ofsted 1999). Ouston and Davies (1998 cited in Earley 1998) show that schools serving disadvantaged communities typically believed they would never meet the Ofsted 'ideal' and consequently felt constantly under pressure and generally negative about inspection. Unless they feel Ofsted take into account the particular context and culture of the school they make little progress after a critical inspection. Matthews and Sammons (2004) further note how ineffective schools have difficulty in accepting the validity of adverse judgements (p.50). My own research (Anderson 1996 and 2000) supports the belief that it can take months before schools feel able to engage productively in planning for improvement. Duffy (1996) makes repeated

references to the stress caused to teachers and headteachers as a result of a poor inspection outcome, with most schools reporting post-Ofsted malaise, increased absenteeism and feelings of exhaustion. Matthews and Sammons (2004) observe that Inspection can leave a feeling of anti-climax in some schools and post-inspection blues in others (p.55). Far from being a spur to action, the Ofsted process can bring a real loss of direction at the very time when they need to focus on actions that support improvement. Gray (2000) observes that after Ofsted Inspection there is:

a pressing need for schools to find (or rediscover) a sense of purpose and find ways of progressing issues with a rapidity which may be unfamiliar(p.17)

Furthermore Gray (op cit) asserts that for schools placed in special measures, the experience is scarring and the position they find themselves in particularly stark (p.19). Turner (1998 p.96) confirms staff being 'devastated,' and Pugh (1998) suggests:

staff responses follow the recognised pattern of grieving (denial, anger and depression), before more constructive possibilities for change began to emerge (p.108).

Earley (1997 pp. 387-400) also describes the shock, anger and rejection experienced by governing bodies before the stages of acceptance and help. Some of the SCC in the study had particularly traumatic Ofsted experiences and may well question the relevance of working in partnership with a school that has not experienced this debilitating effect. SCC are likely to be preoccupied with the urgent need to address key issues and not feel that building a new partnership is a priority activity. The research will explore appropriateness of SCC forming new partnerships in the period following on a damaging inspection. To what extent then can partnerships support schools in these particularly difficult periods and can partnership work continue effectively for either school during the period of Ofsted inspection and post-

inspection?

By definition a failing school is judged as having very limited capacity for self-renewal (Barber op cit p.27) yet given a limited time to improve, to become more effective. Failure of the school becomes largely attributed to the weaknesses of the teachers, school leaders and managers and arguably ignores the social and economic context of the school and its pupils. Working with an effective partner may reinforce the view that it is the weaknesses of staff that has to be addressed. Myers and Goldstein (op cit p.175) express concern at the way school effectiveness research has, in this sense, been misused to shift the blame onto schools by making them entirely responsible for any 'failure.' Mortimore and Whitty (1997 p.10) analyse the complex relationship between schools and society and argue that blaming schools for the problems of society is unfair and unproductive. They observe however that schools with high proportions of disadvantaged pupils can transform a culture of inertia or despair but they need extra resources and the teachers who choose to teach in these schools need to be supported rather than blamed. Indeed Gray (2000 p.3) notes that different types of schools have required different amounts of time to improve and schools experiencing very high levels of social deprivation, take longer. Gray also asserts that the most obvious contextual characteristic shared by schools in special measures is the high levels of social deprivation. Ofsted (1999a) also notes that:

smaller schools and those with falling rolls are over represented
in the SCC group (p.54)

Gray and Wilcox (1995) confirm that research evidence suggests that turning around such schools is extremely difficult although the evaluation of Ofsted indicates that 80% of special measures schools improve (Matthews and Sammons 2004). Can the partnerships support improvement where factors contributing to the challenge for improvement may be rooted in issues of disadvantage, size and falling rolls, and

partner schools are large, robust institutions, serving more advantaged communities?

It is not the main focus of this study to challenge the Ofsted framework (2003a), the criteria for placing schools in special measures or on the LEA SCC register. Although Barber (op cit) accepts that Ofsted has had a bad press, he nevertheless believes it has changed the educational landscape for the better. Central to his model for improvement is the:

judicious mix of pressure and support (p.22).

It is important therefore to place the partnership strategy within the framework of 'pressure and support' and research how this impacts on the process of partnership working.

(e) School Culture

One thing that most researchers are agreed upon is that schools in trouble have troubled histories (Gray 2000 p.5). Gray argues that more attention needs to be paid to the school's 'natural history' (Gray *et al.* 1999). Hargreaves (1995) suggests that there is:

too much emphasis on symptoms of failure and too little understanding of its pathology (p.6)

Schools don't suddenly fail, and attention needs to be paid to the culture of the school; how they understand 'the way things are done around here.' Schein (1985) defines school culture as:

the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously and that define in a basic taken for granted fashion an organisation's view of itself and its environment.'

Stoll (1998 p.1) argues that every school is indeed 'situationally unique' with a culture that is hard to grasp and change. Stoll suggests that teachers in ostensibly similar schools can see things very differently. This raises further questions as to whether teachers in ostensibly different schools can develop a shared understanding of

what needs to be done to improve partner schools.

Hargreaves (1995 p.28) suggests four different types of school culture expressed in terms of the key components of social control over pupils and teachers and social cohesion. Where a school is exceptionally weak in both social control and cohesion it can face serious problems and can jeopardise the possible effect of partnership working. Hargreaves describes a 'survivalist' culture, where social relations are poor, teachers live a day at a time, feel unsupported, strive to maintain basic control and compromise academic work standards in exchange for not engaging in misconduct. Here too students feel alienated from work that bores them; delinquency and truancy rates are high. Maden and Hillman (1996) describe troubled schools where:

an abundance of energy and commitment are needed just to
tread water (p.335)

Reynolds (1996 op cit) also reminds us that there are those whose culture make them open to support, while in other schools, fear of outsiders and fear that change will be unsuccessful and further hurt those with low esteem, reinforces the view that those offering support or advocating change:

don't know what it is like around here (p.43).

Where the ethos is one of insecurity, hopelessness and staff morale is low, the SCC is unlikely to be able to engage in the partnership and the partner school is likely to find their efforts frustrated. Working alongside a SCC requires a culture of collaboration which may be lacking within the partnership. Handscomb (2004) suggests schools need to be open and willing to change, with structures that provide the rationale for partnership and processes that support collaboration. Mulford and Silins (2005 p.139) also assert that even the best reforms are likely to fail in the face of cultural resistance from schools. More optimistically, Louis and Miles (1992 p.8) suggest that

over time, schools can develop 'improvement cultures' as they move from 'shallow' coping strategies to 'deep' strategies, based on a greater understanding of why things are as they are and a willingness to change. Will working in partnership support the development of such strategies, or reinforce already held beliefs and existing practices?

In his popular text on organisational effectiveness, Covey (1992 pp.48-52) suggests a continuum through which an organisation moves from dependence, through independence to interdependence. Recognition that SCC are moving along this continuum, doing things differently, identifying how they 'used to do things,' is an important touchstone for cultural change within the partnership initiatives.

(f) Leadership in SCC and effective schools

The importance of leadership and management is central to creating the conditions for securing sustainable school improvement (Gray and Wilcox 1995; Stoll and Fink 1996; Teddlie and Stringfield 1993; Sammons *et al.* 1997; Stoll and Myers 1998; Harris and Bennett 2001). Organisational change is the result of a host of complex relationships and conditions (Evers and Lakomski, 2000), however Reynolds (1998 p.170 *op cit*) argues that schools can be 'turned around' within a few months following the appointment of a new headteacher, while Whatford (1998 p.71 *ibid*) highlights the difficulty in making the 'right' leadership appointment. Taggart and Sammons (1999 p.161) also link a change in leadership with improvement especially of weaker schools. Ofsted (1997 p.10) notes that in all but a few cases the headteacher is new to the school just before or just after a critical inspection and this change often gives the school the impetus to improve. Furthermore, Ofsted (2005 p.52) confirm the dominant factor in turning around a weak school is the schools capacity to make the most of external support and suggests the key to this is the quality of leadership. This

has implications for partnership working where there is a new headteacher or when the headteacher in the SCC is perceived as part of the problem rather than part of the solution (Hopkins 2001) or where lack of leadership results in a culture of fragmentation (Harris 2002). The context of the headteacher's position in a SCC needs to be understood and appreciated by those working in partnership. Southworth (2005 p.159) suggests that the focus on context underlines the fundamental importance of 'contingency theory' which he believes steers current thinking about school leadership. Contingency theory suggests that what leaders do is largely contingent upon the circumstances and situations they find themselves in. Leithwood *et al.* (1999 p.15) confirms the importance of how leaders respond to the unique organisational circumstances, indeed the wide variation in school contexts and situations requires a variety of different leadership responses. While there is an assumption that leaders are capable of mastering a large repertoire of leadership practices, it is also accepted that certain leadership styles may be effective in an effective school but can be less so in a SCC. Southworth (op cit p.159) accepts that much of what leaders do is generic, however Contingency theories pose the problem of balancing the general with the particular and highlight the need for differentiated provision. For Southworth (ibid p.161) the notion of Distributed Leadership is most appropriate as it shifts the focus from the 'heroic' leader who believes he or she knows what to do, to belief in the power of everyone within the organisation working out what to do. This also marks the shift towards schools becoming learning communities which foster and develop leadership at every level. The partnership strategy with a clear focus on the leadership of the head may indeed support the notion of the 'heroic' partner working to help develop the 'heroic' headteacher to turn around the SCC and thereby neglect the potential for leadership to be distributed.

Crow (2005 p.65) observes the increased interest in the leadership in the particular context of schools facing challenging circumstances. Ofsted (2003) also reports the growing awareness that:

the ways in which the characteristics of strong leadership and good management are applied in different circumstances, is of fundamental importance (p.3).

Crow (op cit) suggests that as leadership is contextual this should be reflected in the preparation of leaders in schools facing challenging circumstances. He believes that school leadership in such circumstances is shaped by the movement from an industrial model, with an emphasis on rationality, standardised curricula and hierarchical systems, to a post-industrial and post-modern era, characterised by complexity and uncertainty. Leadership research has also shifted from the focus on how one person turns the school around, to leadership distributed amongst numerous individuals.

Furthermore Crow asserts that unique combinations of factors such as, budget difficulties, recruitment and retention of staff, levels of attainment, rates of exclusion, falling rolls and many others, adds to the complexity and uncertainty confronting leaders in SCC. He suggests that programmes that emphasise the rationality of leadership and management are indeed inappropriate for the preparation and support of headteachers in SCC. Crow believes that headteachers who are not from schools facing challenging circumstances have:

limited perspective on what needs to be done as their effectiveness is located in their current school(p.67).

This raises issues for setting up partnerships between schools where the partner head may have limited knowledge and understanding of how to lead and manage in such complex and uncertain situations.

The notion of situational leadership may need to be matched with an appreciation of situational partnership. The strategy of partnering a SCC and an

‘effective’ school may be flawed from the outset if insufficient attention is paid to understanding and appreciation of the context of both the SCC and the effective school. In my earlier research (Anderson 2000) the headteacher of a SCC observed strategies in several ‘effective’ schools and tried to replicate them, with disastrous results! While linking with an effective school provides the opportunity to observe a headteacher in that situation, it does not necessarily reveal what a SCC needs to do in different context. The head of the SCC may learn about sustaining a school that has already been improved by a powerful headteacher, rather than learning how to turn a school around in more challenging and complex circumstances.

Fullan (2001 p.31) observes that even if the headteacher learns the best practices about what to do, there is still a major issue about convincing staff to buy into them and make them work. As Day *et al.* (2000) state:

it is one thing to have a vision, another thing for the vision to guide the behaviour of an entire organisation (p.20)

This resonates with both the effective school when staff and governors do not see the relevance of and are not committed to working in partnership with a SCC and with the SCC where beleaguered staff have become immune, inoculated against new initiatives.

Patterson and West-Burnham (2005) focus on the particular challenge for new headteachers as they:

take the greatest step change in the career of a school leader, isolated and swamped by the multiple demands made on them (p.108)

Four out of the six heads in this study are new to headship and have the additional demands of being in a SCC. Bright and Ware (2003) point out that most new headteachers get to grips with the job the hard way, by learning from their mistakes. Hobson, Brown *et al.* (2003) conclude that new heads typically struggle to get to grips

with financial matters, staffing, site management and Government initiatives.

Although experiencing the challenge of these issues may be a powerful stimulus for learning, support for new heads through partnership may be a reliable strategy. Indeed Bush, Briggs *et al.* (op cit) suggest a predominantly process-based approach, anchored in the participant's schools, may be more effective in promoting leadership learning than content-based courses. Weindling (2004) also shows that active work and problem-based learning are becoming more prevalent in leadership programmes.

While Leithwood (1995), in a review of American Leadership Preparation Programmes asserts that programmes stressing reflection, collaboration and active problem solving, make a significant difference to the leader's success, McCarthy (1999) concludes that we don't actually know if such programmes:

produce effective leaders who create school environments that enhance student learning (p.133).

Most evaluations of leadership support programmes are limited to assessing the extent of participants' satisfaction with their programmes and sometimes their perception of influence (McCarthy 2002). Indeed Patterson and West-Burnham (op cit) point out that there is yet little evidence of how programmes of support influence leadership. The partnerships between effective schools and SCC however have the potential to offer support and learning through meeting, sharing and conversation. Harri-Augustine and Thomas (1991) highlight the positive outcomes of learning conversations that develop through mentoring, coaching and critical friendship. Mentoring traditionally focuses on knowledge transfer as the primary means of learning a new role. Coaching can either provide specific training to develop a specific skill or complete a specific task; like mentoring, coaching creates the opportunity for reflective thinking (Kanter 1977 cited in Coles and Southworth 2005), to broaden experience (Torrance 1984) and build confidence. Hobson *et al.* (2003)

find strong evidence for the efficacy of mentoring and peer support networks and Earely *et al.* (2002) report that the majority of new headteachers identify successful school leaders as a source of inspiration. While mentor support is most appropriate for those new in post it can be resisted by those more experienced who see it as a sign of their weakness or that the situation they are in needs greater expertise than they have to resolve it. Berwick (2004) notes that some established headteachers involved in the London Challenge Consultant Leaders Programme suggest the acceptance of a Consultant Leader (peer headteacher) implies some degree of failure on their part and see partnership as a 'deficit' model. By contrast, MacBeath (1998) stresses the important role of the 'critical friend' who brings both:

unconditional support and unconditional critique (p.8),

a measure of objectivity as well as a measure of support (MacBeath 1999 p.110).

This can be aligned with Barber (op cit) who advocates the notion of 'pressure and support' to capture appropriate strategies for partnership to support school improvement. In addition Brookfield (1987) identifies the reciprocal and evolving nature of the learning conversation that entails both diversity and agreement. Achieving the balance between challenge and support is critical for improvement however and Crawford and Earley (2004) question if the relationship is likely to be based more on support than challenge. In the analysis of the primary leadership programme Ofsted (2004) note the reluctance of some Consultant Leaders to challenge schools. For improvement to happen the right relationships and match of mentor, coach or critical friend is essential. Southworth (op cit) reminds us of the importance of getting the match right through a process that is unfortunately not a science (p.789). Zey (1984 cited in Coles and Southworth 2005) asserts that the most effective matches are made by the participants themselves, rather than by an

administrative process.

Crow (2005 p.73) suggests that the relationships that develop between effective schools and SCC may increase the capacity of both if they can create a co-learning experience; it can also bring additional resources and even improve the status of the SCC. Mitchell and Sackney (2000 p.121 cited in Harris 2002) illustrate how an effective partner school can act as external 'change agent.' Fullan (1991) also identifies how the external change agent can assist the change process through the phases of 'initiation, implementation and sustaining,' while not attempting to instigate or implement on behalf of the school. Crow (op cit) indeed warns that poorly designed or ineffective matching can result in:

draining critical leadership resources from the school that can ill afford it (p.76).

Crow highlights the limitations and potential pitfalls of using heads of effective schools as mentors for SCC. He suggests that over time effective headteachers are likely to have selected a limited set of approaches to leadership and management which will not address the complexity required in the SCC.

While the heads of effective schools may be expected to have the technical skills to accomplish the tasks of the role, Greenfield (1985 p.72) suggests they may not have the cultural learning about the values and norms for changing schools facing challenging circumstances. Furthermore, Crow (ibid) asserts that using effective heads to pass on knowledge, values and skills is likely to produce:

custodial, non-innovative outcomes (p.75).

Mulford (2003) suggests that mentoring the headteacher may indeed promote the image of the heroic head and Crow and Matthews (1998 cited in Coles and Southworth 2005) highlight dysfunctional mentoring relationships, where the mentor's personal interests and selfish concerns are the main focus; where over

reliance on the mentor creates an unhealthy dependency. In addition Hay (1995) highlights the danger of the mentor who tries to create a clone and promote a single image of the effective leader; ignoring the uniqueness of the SCC and the diversity of learning and leadership styles.

Clearly the extent to which coaching, mentoring or critical friendship contributes to improvement will be determined largely by the attitudes and approaches of those in the partner schools and the receptiveness of those in SCC. Fullan (1999) confirms the opportunity to create new knowledge not through the acquisition of other's practices as products but rather the opportunity to generate new ideas and fresh approaches. Within the partnership strategy, will SCC seek to import practice or use the opportunity to discuss practice; to challenge thinking and create new ways of working through mentoring, coaching or critical friendship?

Flintham (2004) and Hartle (2005) are interested in headteachers involved in the improvement of other schools; what motivates them to engage in partnership and collaboration? Flintham (op cit p.18) notes the increase in headteachers who see this opportunity as career progression; intent to build upon their headship experience and seeking to generalised into wider contexts. This is relatively new as such career movement is not common especially for secondary heads (Earley and Weindling 2004; Fidler and Jones 2005); many indeed remain in their schools until retirement. Fidler and Atton (2004) suggest that the growth in this professional work can provide headteachers with essential revitalisation and refreshment, to ensure their effectiveness does not plateau and also prepare for professional work after headship. Ofsted (1999) asserts that such activities can benefit the headteachers performing them and also their host schools. NCSL refer to this as the fifth stage of headship – consultant leadership (2001); it is closely aligned to Fullan's (2005) 'system leaders.'

It is important to discern what motivates our effective partner heads to get involved in the strategy and do they and their schools benefit from the engagement with SCC?

(g) Working in partnership

The DfEE Schools in Challenging Circumstances, Pilot Partnerships Initiatives (2001), describes a number of collaborative ventures which aim to tackle some of the barriers to school improvement. The outcomes across the initiatives are variable and reveal that improvement is largely about establishing a collaborative or partnership culture rather than evidencing any immediate or particular improvement in practice. In all the initiatives there is an emphasis on the time needed for teams to start working together across the schools and a common problem is identified as staff not understanding what the initiative is about. Covey (1992) underlines the importance of involving staff:

without involvement there is no commitment (p.29)

Winitzky *et al.* (1992 cited in Fullan 1993) reveal that in school-university partnerships, the relationships are overtly top down with those expected to carry them out insufficiently involved in planning them. While several of the DfEE partnership initiatives identify the value of having time to reflect and share expertise, few record actual improvements in teaching and learning with progress being hampered by recruitment and retention issues.

Some SCC value partnership initiatives mainly as a source of extra money and resources while others fail to see relevance for themselves or their effective partner and believe it just reinforces the perception that they are 'weak.' Effective partners are concerned that they will be judged by the improvement of the SCC and that their own efficiency can be compromised by spending time out of their own school. Ghouri (1999 cited in Burton and Brundrett 2002) also recognises that schools trying to

disseminate good practice find themselves under pressure to maintain their perceived levels of excellence whilst attempting to assist others. This study looks at what happens when issues arise and demands increase in the effective school; will they focus on their own needs and pull back from partnership activities? Furthermore, will the partnerships get beyond the creation of a collaborative culture and impact on practice?

Atkinson (2002) suggests that an effective board or steering group is an essential requirement for the success of every partnership. The absence of this group means that important issues may not be dealt with. Monthei (1992 in Fullan op cit) raises issues about the preparation of teachers for this type of initiative. He indeed suggests that teachers' backgrounds do not in fact prepare them for collaborative roles without consultation and training (p.129). Fullan (1992) asserts that when teachers are engaged in curriculum development with colleagues, they must be prepared to:

put their advocacy in perspective (p.128).

The advocate of any innovation must be sensitive to the need for the other teachers to come to grips with the change:

the more the advocate is committed to a particular innovation,
the less likely he or she is to be effective in getting it
implemented' (p.128).

This is of particular relevance in SCC, where those from the effective schools are at different starting points, with different priorities and partnership may not be the most important thing on the minds of those in the SCC.

Lack of a shared understanding and preparation for partnership working is taken up by Southworth (1995). While partnership is frequently used as if its meaning was obvious, he suggests that it requires greater transparency. Although his research is essentially about the relationships between heads and their deputies, it reveals much

about the characteristics and prerequisites for effective partnership working. He emphasises the need for a shared philosophy about learning, belief and vision about how schools should be organised and commitment to what they should do to improve. He confirms the need to build trust, to value and respect the partner's judgements and opinions. Walker *et al.* (1998 p.2 cited in Harris 2002) underline the importance and pervasiveness of trust in building a learning community and Bryk and Schneider (2002) suggest such trust comes from having respect for one another's dignity and ideas, belief in each others competence, high personal and professional regard and integrity. Schools need time to build trust; to share and communicate across the schools and plans must remain flexible as a climate for collaboration is established (Harris 2002 p.102). Lownsbrough and Huber (2003) focus on managing expectations for the lifetime of the partnership, particularly when new staff members are brought in. They assert that teachers need to know what they are expected to achieve and extra anxiety may be caused when they are asked to stretch themselves beyond their current roles. They also identify a frequent cause of tension in partnerships is the tendency for one partner to dominate or the other to not 'pull their weight.' Furthermore, insecurity about the longevity of funding arrangements can lead to lack of commitment to collaborative work.

In this study the reality of partnership is examined through research questions and further issues raised by the literature. There is a particular focus on the relationship that develops between the headteachers and in some cases the senior and middle managers. Schools do not suddenly 'fail' and attention is paid to the background and history of the SCC and the context in which the 'action' takes place. The research examines the views and perspectives of those closely involved in the partnerships. Hopkins (2001) warns that much is expected of school improvement

strategies, particularly from those:

desperately seeking simple and rapid solutions to complex challenges (p.2)

Gray and Wilcox (1995), Stoll and Myers (1998) remind us that there are no 'quick fixes' for improvement. As Fullan (1991) summarises:

educational change is technically simple and socially complex (p.65).

The simplicity of the partnership strategy may indeed belie the complexity of the task of improvement.

Conclusion

The literature provides a number of perspectives from which the partnership strategy can be viewed and is a key influence on the shape and structure of this research. In particular they raise additional sub-questions which are added to the initial research questions (pp 15-17)

- Will a special professional relationship, founded on mutual trust, build between the Head of the SCC and their LEA chosen partner, and will this help the SCC accept the need for change and build capacity for improvement?
- Is the period immediately following a damaging Ofsted inspection an appropriate time to seek to form a new partnership, and can partnership continue effectively for either school during the period of Ofsted inspection and post-inspection?
- Can teachers in ostensibly different schools develop a shared understanding of what needs to be done to improve partner schools?

These questions will be examined through the research process and the analysis that investigates the beliefs and assumptions on which the partnership initiative is built. Improvement through partnership is based on the combined notion of learning from and learning with one another. The knowledge is essentially practitioner knowledge

which may create new knowledge about what to do. While this interaction may be necessary for developing new strategies for improvement, it is not in itself sufficient if it neglects the knowledge derived from theory and research into the practice of improving schools, particularly those in challenging circumstances. The analysis will seek to establish where current research informs learning within the partnership initiative. The literature review undertaken to inform the research underlines the complexity of school improvement and gives direction to strategies for securing more effective partnerships. The next chapter moves on to describe the methodology adopted for the investigation.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I describe and reflect on the overall research process which seeks to address the research questions and by so doing verify, build upon and extend knowledge about how schools and LEAs achieve their goals. The chapter is divided into six sections covering:

- (i) Research approach;
- (ii) Research design;
- (iii) Collection of data;
- (iv) Ethical dimensions in relation to this research context;
- (v) Data analysis;
- (vi) Validity and trustworthiness.

Section (i) Research Approach

The most important and difficult responsibility for the researcher is in the choice of research methodology. Far from being neutral, techniques of data collection and analysis in educational and social science research are underpinned by cultural assumptions. It is important therefore to identify the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that underpin the research along with their strengths and limitations. Usher (1996) suggests that failure to examine these assumptions leads to research being understood as a 'technology,' simply a set of method, skills and procedures applied to a defined research problem (p. 17). The selection of suitable research methodology and the process of analysis adopted are influenced by the researcher's basic set of beliefs about the nature of reality and how we can know and gain knowledge of the world. The ontological and epistemological assumptions and the methodology chosen then form a framework for the process of research, data collection and analysis; with different theoretical traditions providing different

interpretive contexts. Ontology traditionally is concerned with what exists, the essence of things, reality, 'how we are.' Epistemology traditionally is concerned with what distinguishes different kinds of knowledge claims and what allows for distinctions to be made between 'knowledge' and 'non-knowledge;' it is about 'how we know.' This involves discussion of what can be 'known;' how knowledge can be obtained and communicated to others and asks if knowledge can be obtained only from personal experience or obtained indirectly by other means? Ontological and epistemological questions are related since claims about what exists in the world imply claims about how what exists can be known. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) suggest that ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions, which in turn have methodological implications for the choice of data collection. However methodology should not be confused with theories of knowledge; as Bryman (1998) points out, different epistemologies do not necessarily lead to different research practices.

The approach used here is best described as interpretive and subjective as opposed to the scientific and experimental paradigm which rests upon the creation of theoretical frameworks that can be tested by experimentation, replication and refinement. I work here within the hermeneutic/interpretive epistemology which is not concerned with generalisation, prediction and control, but with interpretation, meaning and illumination. Hermeneutic/interpretation epistemology assumes all human action is meaningful and can be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. If research is confined to the observable or empirically given, it misses out on some of the most important dimension of social enquiry. Researchers in this field seek to make sense of what they are researching through interpretive schemes or frameworks. The process is one of 'double sense' making, referred to as

the ‘double hermeneutic’ (Usher op cit p.19), as both researcher and researched are ‘interpreters or sense-makers.’ Such enquiry involves interpreting the actions of those who are themselves interpreters; the interpretations of interpretations. The double hermeneutic means that ‘reflexivity’ is present at the very heart of the research and part of the research act. Knowledge formation is circular, iterative and cumulative; it involves interpreting the whole and the parts. From this perspective it follows therefore that as all sense-making is from an interpretive framework, all knowledge is essentially perspective bound and partial.

In respect of this study, my belief was that I would learn through the questions asked, the conceptual frames and methods used and this would allow for conclusions to be drawn. By revealing and interpreting the perspectives of those involved, I would be able to explore the ways in which the partnership initiative was initiated, how it impacted on school improvement and strategies for supporting SCC and answer the research questions. Gadamer (1975) argues that it is impossible for researchers to escape from the ‘pre-understandings’ (p.173) that they hold about what is being researched. He asserts that it is precisely through the interplay between the interpretive framework the researcher holds and the elements of the actions that they are trying to understand, that new knowledge is developed. In other words, far from my pre-understandings about partnership and collaboration being closed prejudices or biases, they are tested and modified by the reflective process of interpretation and understanding and are essentially the starting point for acquiring knowledge. Hermeneutic understanding is therefore a learning experience involving ‘dialogue’ between ourselves as researchers and that which we are trying to understand. Through these interpretations I have become more aware of my beliefs, attitudes and my previous experiences and though not able to transcend them, have learned more about

my professional role and the context within which I work. Through working within these epistemological and ontological assumptions, I believe I have made a new contribution to research knowledge and understanding about School Improvement strategies and also developed new professional knowledge relevant to those working in an advisory capacity regarding school improvement.

Section (ii) Research Design

The design of the research was informed by the combination of theoretical and methodological factors and the amount of time available for the study. In brief, the field research took the form of the six case studies of partnerships formed by the LEA, and involved interviews and with headteachers, other school staff, LEA officers responsible for the partnership initiative and email conversations and meetings with advisers linked to the schools. The LEA officers selected six of the most concerning schools from the Register of SCC to be partnered with six effective schools as identified by County value data and whose headteachers had shown interest in partnering a school on the Register. The topic is new and interesting as a strategy intended to promote knowledge transfer, joint learning and leadership development through partnership between SCC and 'effective' schools.

I chose to use the case study approach as I have found it most useful in my previous research and it fitted well with the topic and the research questions. Cohen and Manion (1994) advocate the use of case study research and consider it to be:

eminently suitable to many of the problems that the education researcher has to face (p.106).

Unlike the experimenter who seeks to manipulate variables to determine their significance, as case study researcher it was important for me to seek to observe the characteristics of the individual cases, probe deeply to analyse specific phenomena and identify various interactive processes at work within the dynamics of the

partnerships. As Bell (1987) asserts:

a successful case study provides a three-dimensional picture and illustrates the relationships, micro-political issues and patterns of influences in a particular context (p.108)

The purpose of this research is to establish understandings about forming partnerships and the contribution partnership and collaboration can play within school improvement. Cohen and Manion (op cit) suggest that the antipathy toward statistical-experimental paradigm has created a

boom industry in case study research(p.107)

although they stress that it should be seen as:

complementing rather than competing with the experimental stance (p.106).

Case study methods have been used extensively in contemporary social science and in educational research studies of school effectiveness and school improvement (e.g. Stoll and Myres 1998; Gray 2000; Maden 2001; Burton and Brundrett 2002). As case study researcher, I was able to employ a wide range of techniques to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data, collected through a distinct method of observation. Within case study research, there are two principal types of observation-participant and non-participant. Here I was a participant observer, involved and engaged in the very activities that I set out to observe; a point that I will return to later in Section (iv) p 71. I was able to combine my adviser responsibility to monitor the developments of the partnerships with my researcher role and in this way made best use of the time and the opportunities available. Clearly the findings from each case study are specific to each partnership although the method aims to be able to give insights into the wider population. With only six case studies there are limits on the extent to which generalisations can be made but six cases do provide the opportunity for comparisons to be made and the identification of patterns (similarities and

dissimilarities) which support the building of models and typologies. Bell (op cit) further suggests such research enables others in similar situations to recognise problems and identify ways of understanding them and resolving them. It therefore provides an approach which others can follow when seeking to research similar situations.

The choice of case study method is based on the ontological assumption that the reality of partnership is best revealed and understood through exploring the perceptions and experiences of the people involved. This is achieved through researching the:

product of individual consciousness' of those involved
(Cohen and Manion, op cit p.107).

The process of being labelled a SCC and joining in partnership with another school deemed to be an effective school has an individual subjective reality for those involved. The partnership has also implications relating to external inputs such as resources, attention, support and pressure for both the SCC and the partners school. It was important therefore for me to explore the context, internal dynamics and micro-politics of partnership in an educational context; in a culture and climate that is still more readily defined by schools acting independently and in competition for pupils, staff and resources.

Through this research the research questions will be answered and an explanation and understanding will emerge as to the nature of the partnership intervention, the various ways it was implemented and the contribution made to the improvement of the SCC. In particular, models of practice are explored in order to generate understanding about why some partnerships appeared to flourish while others withered away.

This research approach aligns with the view that knowledge is personal,

subjective and unique; the research design seeks to take into account and understand the interpretations which participants give to their actions and their understandings of the concept of school improvement and the processes that may influence it and communicate this new understanding to a wider audience. As a geographer, I find the metaphor of 'landscape' (Bowe *et al.* 1994) very useful to help explain different views about the workings of each partnership. Those involved in the partnership strategy are on the same 'landscape,' yet view the partnership initiative from their own unique standpoint. Through a combination of interviews with headteachers, teachers and LEA officers and email conversations and meetings with SLAs, these views and personal understandings are accessed. Guskey (2000) suggests five 'levels' of data to be collected when evaluating professional development programs, building from participants' reactions through to participants' learning; identifying features of organisational change; use of new knowledge and eventual impact on students' learning. The research will document and trace how partnerships are perceived to evolve and their potential and perceived impact by seeking data on the first four levels. The research places emphasis on what is unique and particular about each partnership as well as seeking to identify similarities, features or experiences that appear to be common.

Section (iii) Data Collection

I have sought to systematically collect data which was sufficient to respond to the research questions. My research plan comprised the collection and analysis of five sets of data: literature mainly from the fast growing School Effectiveness and School Improvement field which provides a context and background to the study (see Chapter 2), notes of meetings, documents from schools, email conversations with School Link Advisers (SLAs) and the collection of data from forty-nine semi-structured interviews

with key participants or stakeholders. The LEA officers responsible for setting up the strategy were interviewed at the start of the initiative and the interviews with headteachers and staff took place during the four terms of the project. It was important to first understand the LEA's rationale for and the expectations of the partnership initiative as these would raise areas to be explored later with the SLAs and the schools. These personal interviews provided a rich seam of data regarding insights and overall understanding of the partnership initiative as a strategy to support SCC (Appendices 1-3 pp 212-227). Data was also collected during meetings, meeting notes, chance conversations and email contact with LEA officers and SLAs. The email conversations with the SLAs in particular provided a further source of rich data about their involvement in setting up the partnership initiative and brokering the individual partnerships (Appendix 4 p.232). Secondary source material was obtained from some of the schools although this is variable as some partnerships did not produce any documentation (Appendices 5-15 pp. 238-284). Action Plans are a common feature of school improvement initiatives (Stringfield *et al.* 1996; Taggart and Sammons 1999) and along with School Development Plans may help reveal the extent to which activities are designed and owned by staff (MacGilchrist *et al.* 1995). While aiming to use the wealth of data and information gathered to the full, I have had to come to terms with not analysing all of what was potentially available. I have also noted Hammersley's (2003) summary of the radical critique of interviews and have exercised caution regarding the tendency to too readily accept the interviewees' accounts of what happened.

The sample includes the six most concerning schools on the LEA register of SCC and the six partner schools, deemed to be effective and selected by the LEA, in six partnerships. Table 2 below shows the pattern of interviews and meetings

commencing in summer term 2002 and the schedule through to summer 2003. There were two half-day meetings for the schools and advisers in the autumn term (2002) and spring term (2003).

Patterns of interviews and meetings

Summer term 2002	Stage 1	Interviews with the LEA officers and headteachers in each partnership. Meetings and email exchanges with SLAs. Conference for partnership schools.
Autumn 2002	Stage 2	Interviews with the headteachers in each partnership. Meetings and email exchanges with SLAs. Partnership conference.
Spring 2003	Stage 3	Interviews with headteachers, partnership managers and other staff. Meetings and email exchanges with SLAs. Partnership meeting with partner schools, officers and SLAs.
Summer 2003	Stage 4	Interviews in headteachers, partnership managers and other staff. Meetings and email exchanges with SLAs.

Table 2

(a) Interviews

Even though I was involved in the partnership strategy as an adviser and by inclination an advocate for partnership and collaboration, the current reality of the headteacher in a SCC, partnered through an LEA strategy with the 'effective' school, was not readily accessible to me. The world of the LEA officer was more accessible to me but it was also important to understand the initiative from their viewpoint. As already mentioned, our view or perspective depends on where we stand on the landscape (Bowe *et al.* op cit). My research design is based on the belief that interviewing is probably the best way of gaining access to others' views of past and currents events and gathering information about the partnerships that I am unable to experience directly. Patton (1990) argues:

the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in someone else's mind; to access the perspective of the person being interviewed (p.56).

My initial contact to explain the purpose of the research and gain consent to meet was

by telephone with headteachers and face to face with officers and advisers. I took the opportunity to impress upon the interviewees that the research was a rigorous study in respect of my doctoral studies and would not be used directly by the LEA.

The interviews that ensued allowed for initial questions about partnerships to be asked and followed up by further questions to add context, clarify situations, make observations and address any misunderstandings and ambiguities. During the interview, I encouraged interviewees to reconstruct particular events and occasions while I noted their responses in the appropriate schedule (Appendices 1-3 p.212-227). The interviews with the LEA officers about the rationale and the process of setting up of initiative (Appendix 1 p.212) were relatively straightforward and were followed up during other meetings and conferences. The interviews with headteachers (Appendices 2&3 pp.220-227) were central to researching the impact of the partnerships and became more complex and intriguing over time. The data also became richer for me through my active involvement in the process and the opportunity to observe reactions, pick up feelings and gain perceptions. Throughout the headteacher interviews and in follow up interviews, I recounted to them their previous responses in a determined attempt to ensure I was making accurate interpretations. I sought to capture the notion of a developing partnership by recording progress as if through stages of organic growth (Hopkins *et al.* 1996) and locate the initiative within a sequence of activities that reflected the aspirations for the initiative over time. Although this may initially appear linear, as seasonal activities follow on seasonal activities, the growth analogy is useful as unpredictable events and conditions affect growth and this reflects the complexities and the capricious nature of partnership interaction. The timing of the interviews was important; early in the first term of the initiative to explore early impact and enthusiasm and then progressively

later in subsequent terms to allow time for relationships to grow (or wilt) and plans and activities develop and impact (or not).

The interviews were designed to follow a loose pattern but at the same time cover the key research questions drawn both from the literature and the assumptions that underpinned the partnership strategy. In my previous research, I made extensive use of 'one to one' semi-structured interviews to access the personal understandings of others (Anderson 1996 and 2000). I did not consider it necessary to trial the interview schedules as I was confident in my own ability to effectively use the interview situation and the flexibility of the semi-structured format to ensure key questions were always pursued; in addition I did not consider it appropriate to pilot the schedules in non-partnership schools. The interview schedule was adapted to each situation; questions were used as prompts or cues to move the conversation along with a natural flow and at a reasonable pace. Each interview achieved a high degree of relative informality and the highly desirable free flowing 'conversation with a purpose' (Lincoln and Guba 1985 p.85). When interviews are tightly structured only particular questions may be asked and as a result important aspects can be missed and bias is more likely to creep in. The flexibility gained through not following a tight structure, allows for supplementary questioning, information on related areas and 'how,' 'why' and 'what if' questions. The more structured interview can move the conversation on too quickly to the next question. I have found that through not asking another question immediately the interviewee has paused, more often than not results in the interviewee answering further and more deeply; having genuinely had a 'pause for thought.' If the interviewee does not add more, the pause provides the time to form or select the next question. Furthermore, information can be missed if the interviewer starts preparing or selecting the next question while the interviewee is still answering

the previous one. While such techniques are very useful, they do not in themselves ensure total accuracy or make the process immune from bias. However, these considerations are less relevant in the interpretivist tradition. Although care was taken to include all the views expressed, it was possible that sometimes interviewees may have simply forgotten how they felt at the time. In other cases some events may be too sensitive or personal to be recalled and shared. It is also possible that the same question put to the same person at a different time with different emphasis or in a different tone of voice can produce a different response (Cohen and Manion op cit p.281). Furthermore it was possible that interviewees could feel the need to give answers that do not cause offence or lay blame on themselves or others. The sensitivity of the interview may also have been amplified by my role as an LEA Adviser, a point I will return to later in Section (iv) p.71. The creation of a relaxed and comfortable interview situation however, combined with assurances about confidentiality helped build rapport so that more probing questions could be asked. Using the example of Luttrell (2000), time was given at the end of the interview to reflect on the exchanges that took place. In this way it was possible to check that my understanding was in accord with that of the interviewee and so clarify any aspects that remained uncertain. Luttrell (op cit) highlights the dilemma of the researchers who use narrative data; on the one hand striving to listen and represent those being studied 'in and on their own terms' (p. 499) and on the other hand consciously or unconsciously shaping and making sense of the ethnographic encounter according to particular theoretical, ontological, personal and cultural frameworks; a point I will return to in the next section. Successive interviews however provided the opportunity to reflect on previous comments, check consistency and accuracy as well as allowing ideas to develop over time both within each SCC and across each partnership, to try to

ensure that the voices and perspectives of those in the study were not lost. The subsequent interviews were also used to share interpretations and represent a dynamic attempt to co-construct knowledge and understanding (Datnow *et al.* 1998) as well as allow investigation of perceived changes over time in relationships and outcomes. The interviews lasted between sixty and ninety minutes and took place in the interviewee's office to give them familiar surroundings and some control over the proceedings.

Although it was possible to update participants on 'thinking' at further interviews and meetings it was not always possible to share final interpretations when they were made after the allocation of time for the partnership monitoring had ceased or indeed some partners had stopped meeting. This is a weakness that will be remedied in part by publication and my commitment to provide an extended abstract to participants who helped me with the research once the thesis has been examined.

(b) Email conversations, meetings, chance conversations and observations

My role as adviser gave access to meetings and conversations about the partnerships with other advisers, officers and headteachers. Email is used as a regular means of communication within AIS and this provided me with a way of accessing the views and tracking the involvement of the SLAs for the SCC in the partnership initiative, particularly in the early stages of development. I chose to use email as a convenient, time efficient and novel means of accessing the perspectives of the SLAs by instigating an ongoing email dialogue rather than by interview (Appendix 4 p.232). The Advisers were accustomed to email 'conversations' and understood that they would be used to provide data for use in the research. They were aware of established AIS protocols about confidentiality and anonymity and agreed that these would be observed within the research. In the same way as with interviews, initial questions were followed up by further questions to seek clarification and amplification. Face to

face reactions were then accessed at advisor meetings when officers and SLAs were updated on my research and partnerships were discussed. These occasions allowed for emerging themes and issues to be discussed with officers and SLAs and further revealed their own views and understanding about the partnerships and progress being made each half term. This setting was used to test findings and confirm issues and trends with adviser colleagues. Particular note was taken of comments relating to the relationships between the partners, early successes, 'dysfunctional' events and unusual situations. While the reports I made and ensuing discussions could shape their judgements they also helped clarify issues and triangulate data. In addition the two partnership conferences brought most but not all schools together with SLAs and officers to share progress and practice in summer 2002 and autumn 2002 (Table 2 p. 66). I used these conferences to present and discuss my developing theories and models about the partnership initiative. The discussions, chance conversations and observations were recorded afterwards in my notes. These insights contributed to the perceived understandings about the partnership development and to the active process of co-construction.

Section (iv) Ethical dimensions in relation to this research context

Central to this section are the dilemmas of insider research. It is important to explore my frame of reference, my interests, ideology and my experiences as background to this research as the data collection methods and analysis are not free from political and ethical concerns (Scott 1996 p.62). I have adopted a set of ethical guidelines based on those developed by the British Educational Research Association (1992). These include conducting the research with respect for all the participants, respect for knowledge and respect for democratic values. I am committed to avoiding fabrication of evidence, data, findings or conclusions. My intention is to represent my research

process, analysis and outcomes in sufficient detail to allow others to understand and interpret them. I am also committed to communicating the findings to all relevant parties.

Within this study, as researcher I was a participant observer; as adviser I had the responsibility to monitor and support partnership development although not involved directly in implementing the partnership strategy. Although undertaking insider research, I was not directly involved in the preparation for the Partnership Initiative and therefore was able to bring a degree of objectivity to the research process. My involvement provided a high degree of integration with the partnerships and the opportunity to understand why things happened as they did. Case studies based on participant observations are however typically criticised for being:

subjective, biased and lacking in precise quantifiable measures
(Cohen and Manion op cit p.111).

Clearly there was the opportunity for me to either deliberately or unconsciously distort the views of those being questioned or observed, to fit in with my already held views or prejudices based on my values, ideas, feelings, explanations and preconceptions. Firstly, I am known to the headteachers, the advisers and the officers involved in the partnerships. In particular, I have some knowledge and views about the schools, the leadership of the schools and the suitability of partners. Before joining the Advisory Service, I was a headteacher in the County and a colleague to the Heads of the Sagittarius, Aquarius, Leo, Gemini, Taurus, Scorpio, Libra and Pisces Schools. Then as an adviser I organised the Induction Programme for the new headteachers from the Capricorn, Cancer, Virgo and Aries Schools. Secondly, I am part of the advisory service and the research questions focus on the work of the LEA and in particular the officers and my colleague advisers. Finally, my personal experiences of partnership working have led me to the belief that effective partnerships grow when

there is a perceived need and desire to work collaboratively; where partners trust each other, choose to work together, understand the benefits of working interdependently and have the capacity to do so. At the outset therefore, I was likely to be critical of cases where the compatibility of partners was apparently ignored and anticipated finding evidence of dysfunctional relationships that support rather than question my already held beliefs about partnerships.

I have reflected on the extent that my perspectives may have influenced the interview process and the analysis of the data. It has been difficult to draw any definite conclusions but in Chapter 6 I will discuss how my beliefs changed as a result of this study. In the deliberations I have had with myself about this dilemma, I have sought to have a dialogue similar to the one concerning the data analysis of the interviews where I considered assumptions, values and motives for action. Within the hermeneutic/interpretive position in which case study is located, neutrality is not considered to be a major issue as I have sought to make my values and beliefs explicit at the outset. Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987 p.45) highlight the conflicting nature of the notion of neutrality and the opportunity for a 'neutral' person to act in different ways; as a bystander, simply observing, showing no bias to one position or the other; as a 'referee,' seeking to ensure fairness without favour or as 'champion' of the underdog, actively neutral to ensure 'fairness prevails.' Clearly, as an advocate of partnership and collaboration, concerned to highlight the effect of processes that label a school as 'failing,' and with a professional interest in promoting improvement, my intention was to remain 'actively neutral.' As already stated however, my actions were informed by my values and beliefs and these are then integral to the research; they provided the drive and energy for carrying out the study and contribute to its richness. Reliance on the perspectives of the participants alone, to the exclusion of

context would give an incomplete picture and render the methodology 'bereft of its most compelling and useful ingredients' (Scott 1996 p.70). Scott argues that the emphasis given to the descriptive as opposed to the advocacy purpose of the data collection and the way the researcher behaves towards the participants, cannot be separated in any meaningful sense and thus concludes that ethics and epistemology are 'two sides of the same coin' (p.70).

As stated earlier, my engagement as researcher may be compromised by my role as advisor and may influence what was said at interviews. My position as an adviser also placed me in a more commanding role as the research was about engagement in an LEA Initiative. As interviewer however I had the opportunity to address these issues as I was largely in control of the focus of the conversation; I could decide which questions to ask, where to probe further and what to move onto next (Ball 1983 pp. 93-95). Ball highlights how the interviewee, during the course of the conversation may indeed be asked to 'elaborate, define, exemplify and confirm' in a manner that (s)he would probably not be asked to do in conventional discourse. There were some interviewees who at times seemed guarded in their responses; this may have been because of the nature of the question and/or not feeling able to talk as freely as they might have done to an independent researcher. Others took the opportunity to try to use whatever influence they felt I might have to make their views known to the LEA. Those in SCC were likely to be particularly sensitive about the LEA view that they 'needed' an effective partner to support their improvement and the inference that it brings. My prior engagement with many of the interviewees, the trust and rapport that existed with some as colleagues and with others through the induction programme, backed up by assurances about confidentiality and anonymity and the decision not to use a tape recorder during the interviews, due to their sensitive

nature, helped establish a situation where the vast majority felt 'safe to talk.' Although this was not achieved in every situation, the aim was always to gain confidence; to listen intently, to be receptive and sympathetic. Although Ball (op cit) suggests the interviewer comes to know the subject without disclosing views and opinions, I found some judicious sharing of my experience of working in partnership and in challenging situations helped me become credible to those I did not already know and by so doing gain their confidence and promote good dialogue. I also decided not to use a tape recorder; while I accept the use of that device can free the researcher to concentrate more on listening and asking questions, it can also be a distraction and may make the interview more intimidating (Fontana and Frey op cit). Furthermore, it was not usual for meetings between advisers and headteachers to be recorded on tape and my intention was that the interviews would appear as normal as possible. Renzetti and Lee (1993 p.195) highlight the issues for the researcher and the researched when the focus of the inquiry is sensitive. This is particularly so when those being interviewed have presided over schools when there has been a fall in standards of attainment and intake pupil numbers and where leadership was found to be unsatisfactory by Ofsted. For some of those interviewed the interviews were intrusive, for others they were at times an emotional and even cathartic experience (Busher 2002 p.81). Fontana and Frey (1994) remind us that the objects of inquiry in interviewing are human beings and that extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them by pursuing lines of enquiry that could be damaging. It was important to be alert to any change in voice, tone or body language that may reveal emotions aroused by anger, hurt or shame; to listen but not judge; to show understanding (though not necessarily agreement), to record and not always challenge the perceptions. It was fundamentally important however to always seek clarification about views and events that related to the

research questions.

In the event, all those approached agreed to take part in the research and with few exceptions were willing to talk; sharing their views and experiences in a thoughtful way giving no particular indication that information was withheld; an important indicator according to Phillips (1998). Former headteacher colleagues and advisory colleagues were interested in my work and my research and were pleased to help and I am sure I was party to a degree of frankness and openness which might not have been accessible to a complete outsider. Some headteachers in the SCC also expressed their relief at being able to voice their opinions and saw me as a mouthpiece for perceived injustices. On some occasions the interview took on what could be called a counselling or coaching dimension which went beyond the remit for the engagement. This ethical dilemma was resolved for me by firstly acknowledging what was happening and secondly recognising that by their actions and comments they were valuing the engagement and pleased to be associated with the research process; seeing themselves as:

‘worthy object of study, valued, knowledgeable and interesting’ (Skeggs 1994 p.81)

The questions asked during the interviews included a judicious mix of both general or ‘warm up’ and leading to more sensitive topics (Appendices 1-3 pp. 212-227).

Responses were noted down on the interview schedule during the interview. Not everything that was said could be written down, however as much as possible was noted. Care was taken to capture the emotion; to record ‘non-verbal’ responses and reactions that may confirm or question aspects such as conviction and authenticity.

The questions appeared to be answered honestly, with conviction and in my view carry weight. The long serving headteachers in SCC in particular believed their stories were worth telling and that lessons could be learned from their experiences.

Although conducting insider research, I did not seek opportunities for covert research nor obtain data without the knowledge of those I interviewed. Complicated as these issues relating to methodology and ethics are, they are not as complex as those relating to the interpretation and utilisation of the data provided by the interviews. It is possible that after collecting the data, my analysis may be informed by knowledge of the participants from other contexts. However, throughout the data analysis, I sought to be as objective as possible.

Section (iv) Data Analysis

In this research, I have sought to build on my institution focused study (Anderson 2000), a case study of a school in special measures and threatened with closure and have adopted approaches from that study to provide the foundation for this research. This study is however informed by wider reading (see Chapter 2), a more extensive set of data and a more coherent theoretical framework than in the IFS.

Once collected the process of interpreting the data was able to proceed, although a degree of analysis had already been going on during the collection of the data and the meetings with advisers and schools. From my previous research, I believed it would be possible to analyse the data manually using a standard word processing package. Each transcript was given a colour coding to identify the source and placed in sequence for each case. Qualitative research of this nature relies on interpretation and attributing meaning to what was observed and recorded. Jorgensen (1989 p.26) refers to the 'Analytic Cycle' as a process which starts by breaking up, separating or disassembling data into pieces, parts or units. In this way I sorted and sifted the data to search for sequences, patterns or processes and then assembled or reconstructed in a meaningful and comprehensive fashion. For Scheurich (1997 p.112) the crux of interpretation is the 'interpretive moment.' Scheurich further

explains how the researcher brings considerable conscious and unconscious baggage when interpreting. At this interpretive moment all accumulated thoughts, theories, explanations and training are brought to the analysis of data. For me this was the ‘ah ha!’ moment; from the accumulated mass of information, clarity emerged. In this study, although the analysis was based primarily on the data from the interviews and the email conversations, the interpretation was also influenced by the values and opinions I had already formed during ten years of headship and particularly my involvement in The Tilbury Initiative (Anderson 1996). The Tilbury Initiative was started by me and three headteachers after Ofsted inspected all the schools in the town, using the draft Framework for Inspection and published the findings in ‘Access and Achievement in Urban Schools’ (1993). The initiative grew into a partnership between the schools and the LEA and became a stimulating and formative experience which gave hope to the community and raised standards across the town. Scheurich (1997) asserts that the point of interpretation for the researcher is indeed overloaded with such baggage and experiences. The issue of ‘overload’ is addressed firstly by stating my beliefs and previous involvement in partnerships and secondly through the iterative process that reflects analysis and conclusions back to those involved through interviews, emails and meetings. Elliott (1990) also points out the tendency when interpreting data across a number of interviews, to seek consensus rather than to describe conflicts and differences. Every effort was made therefore to highlight differences as well as similarities.

Section (v) Validity and trustworthiness

At the heart of the research approach is the commitment to present the most trustworthy account possible of the data. While errors may be possible (Oakley 2000 p.72) measures were in place to minimise effects arising from the methodology.

Through discussions with my supervisor, and my own reflections on the data analysis, possible bias and subjectivity were explored and minimised. I have already referred to the bias that interviewees could bring to their accounts; however their accounts are those of real people engaged in the real events. In his critique of the interview as a research tool, Kitwood (1977) draws attention to the conflict generated between concepts of validity and reliability. Here he argues that attempts to increase reliability by exercising greater control over the interview process tends to reduce the validity of the encounter; it is the distinctively human element in the interview that is necessary for its 'validity.' In my study I have compared the accounts of the headteachers, SLAs and others about the same events and by this process of triangulation, attempted at least in part to address the issue of insider bias. As already stated, this process is not immune to my values as they also play a part in the data analysis. Griffiths' (1998 p.130) assertion that research is 'improved' by acknowledging that values guide decisions about what is researched and why, strengthens the case for validity. The descriptions, analyses and criticisms generated by the research are therefore based on the assumptions that individuals make in an effort to make sense of their everyday world; within the notion of 'reflexivity,' these are indeed mutually interdependent. As part of the research process, reflexivity subjects the researcher to critical scrutiny at a personal level and at a level of process and practice located within the research community, not only before but during and after the research period.

From my experience of this and previous research I hold to the view that validity is something worked towards rather than something that can be fully achieved and underline the trustworthy nature of the study. Rensetti and Lee (op cit) stress the importance of seeking to gain a 'validly re/constructed re/presentation of 'what is' from the research. Kogan (1994) reminds us that with qualitative research 'we can

only do our best' (p.77) but asserts that doing our best is about building techniques to reveal more of 'what is.' Winnicott (1965) also claims that it is possible to be a 'good enough' researcher, aware of the investments in research relationships, not shying away from frustrations, anxieties and disappointments, able to understand and appreciate differences and by getting it right many times compensating for any mistakes. Thomas (2002) concludes:

'it is the salience and validity of the everyday epistemic devices that gives legitimacy to qualitative research and to any local conclusions drawn from it.'(p.431)

In the final analysis, my research is valid only in the sense that my own judgements and interpretations of the data and evidence provide trustworthy accounts of the way partnerships were perceived to operate and impact by their key participants.

Conclusion

Within this research there was no effort to separate 'theorising' from data collection. The process was intended to be open to ideas and models emerging from the data and the analysis (Paechter 2000 p.35). While Clegg *et al.* (2002 p.131) accept that reflective practice has become the favoured paradigm for the professional development of those in education, they cast some doubt on the clarity of Schon's (1991) concept of the 'reflective practitioner' and the distinctive nature of professional know how. Indeed they suggest there is yet insufficient understanding of the process and too few descriptions of what actually occurs. However this research has afforded me the opportunity to reflect constructively on AIS engagement with schools and partnership strategies for improvement.

The research process has raised further questions in my mind, not least the importance of taking into account, understanding and appreciating the perspectives that other people hold as well as the difficulties of identifying the impact of any

specific improvement strategy. The confidence I have gained through the research is a major part of my professional development. It has encouraged critical reflection on my values and how experiences shape beliefs. I am more aware when other's views, beliefs and assumptions do not appear to be based on sufficient evidence.

Chapter 4. Analysis of data sets and interpretation of the case study findings.

A great deal of data came from the interview research and email conversations; more than could be fully analysed in this study. The secondary data from the schools was variable in quantity and quality as not all partnerships produced the plans and reports expected. The analysis in this and the following chapter are grounded in the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 i.e. how effective is the LEA at matching schools and brokering partnerships that support improvement in SCC? The analysis is also linked to the questions and issues raised in Chapter 2, i.e. will a special professional relationship, founded on mutual trust, build between the head of the SCC and their LEA chosen partner; will this help the SCC accept the need for change and build capacity for improvement?

In Part 1 I will seek to establish the context for the partnership initiative through the perspectives of the LEA officers involved in instigating the partnership strategy and the SLAs who were expected to monitor and evaluate the impact of the partnership strategy in the SCC. There is also an explanation of my ‘adviser’ role to monitor and evaluate the LEA Partnership Strategy. Within this section, the stages of growth are aligned with the research questions related to the matching of schools and the brokering of partnerships, the possible integration of a ‘top down’ approach with ‘inside out’ development, and the part played by the SLA as a possible agent of change begin to be addressed (Table 3a p.83).

Part 2 contains the analysis of the data from six partnerships presented as case studies. The analysis builds on the context and understandings from Part 1 and seeks to address the research questions regarding the building of professional relationships, the transfer of systems and practices and the effect of the Ofsted process on partnership development (Table 3b p. 95). The initiative was initially set to run for

one year but aimed to build an ongoing relationship between the schools. The extent to which partnership fostered and sustained ‘inside out’ capacity development in SCC is also explored.

Stages of development and Research Questions: LEA

Stages of development	Research Questions
Stage 1. Setting up the partnerships. Preparing the ground and deciding what needs to be done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is the LEA at matching schools and brokering partnerships that support improvement in SCC? • How far does the initiative manage to integrate a ‘top down’ approach with ‘inside out’ development?
Stage 2. Developing the partnership. Planting the seeds, watering and nurturing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will a special professional relationship, founded on mutual trust, build between the head of the SCC and their LEA chosen partner? • What part will the effective head and/or the LSA play as possible agents of change?
Stage 3. Incorporation. Harvesting the fruits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are systems and practices transferable and what impact (if any) is there in both SCC and effective school?
Stage 4. Looking back, looking forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the period immediately following a damaging Ofsted inspection an appropriate time to seek to form a partnership? • Will the SCC accept the need to change and build capacity for improvement?

Table 3a

Part 1 The LEA perspective

In May ’02, the Head of Advisory and Inspection Service (AIS), and the Principal Adviser for Secondary Schools were interviewed separately to gain insight into the LEA perspective on the partnership strategy. As brokers for the partnerships, and in the spirit of the Zodiac theme chosen to illuminate this study, this section is called The Astrologers’ View. The setting up of the partnership initiative and the beliefs and values that underpin it are represented as sequential stages in an organic growth model; an appropriate analogy suggested by Hopkins *et al.* (1994) to chart the

development of improvement programmes. Table 3a (p.83) sets out the stages and aligns them with the research questions. The initial stages of the partnership strategy focused on Astrologers' rationale for the initiative and the process of matching partners and brokering the partnerships as they 'prepare the ground and plant the seeds.' The stages that follow are essentially about the Astrologer's expectations as to the possible and/or probable outcomes of the strategy, as the partnerships are given resources and improvement is anticipated. In the final stage the Astrologers reflect and evaluate the process of setting up the partnerships as they look back at what has happened and look forward to improvement in SCC. These same stages are also used in Part 2 to describe the growth of the school partnerships over the four terms of the partnership strategy.

(a) The Astrologers' View

The partnership initiative was devised by the new Head of AIS shortly after her appointment and the Principal Adviser; here referred together as 'The Astrologers.' Both identified the need to respond to the Government reform agenda (DfEE 2000; DfEE 2001), the importance of harnessing the expertise of the 'effective' schools and using partnership to deliver the improvement agenda for SCC.

The Head of AIS believed the partnership initiative was essential as the AIS support for SCC was seen as having limited success, *'we are too laid back about SCC; our practice needs to be more robust.'* She reports seeing the partnership strategy as a major new intervention to address 'weak' leadership and management in the SCC as well as the shortcomings of the Advisory Service. She believed the SCC would improve as management was strengthened through partnership working, *'we need the experts from other schools working along side the senior managers in the SCC, doing the AIS job, with the LEA providing the funding and driving it along.'*

The Head of AIS believed that support previously given to SCC had not and could not secure improvement in SCC; that the Service was, *'good at supporting but not at intervention.'* She appeared convinced the involvement of headteachers from the effective schools would lead to improvement, *'they have systems that work; these need to be driven through in the SCC.'*

Stage 1 Setting up the partnerships. Preparing the ground and deciding what needs to be done.

The Astrologers selected the six most concerning schools from the LEA Cause for Concern Register to be partnered with schools from the top 10% of the LEA's Value Added Table along with Beacon, Specialist and Training Schools where the headteacher had volunteered for the initiative. The Head of AIS was particularly interested in engaging ex-Grant Maintained Schools that had *'drifted away from the LEA.'* She favoured forming partnerships that would attract the 'high profile' headteachers, *'they're always claiming they know better than us, let's see them do it!.'* She was looking for partners with *'strength and ambition and ability to take their Governing Body along.'* Attention was given to existing collaboration or partnership working between schools, provided the partners satisfied the 'effective' criteria stated above. She further argued that neither good personal relationships nor experience of leading a SCC were essential for partnership working *'it's not whether they like each other that's important, it's about impact; this is an intervention, it's the code of practice, it's about partnerships helping develop self-autonomy.'* Furthermore she added *'they don't even have to have a high professional regard for each other.'*

The interview with the Principal Adviser revealed some different views about the partnership initiative. While the Head of AIS identified the strategy as a *'robust high profile challenging intervention,'* he believed it should be more low key,

'building for mutual benefit in a collegial model.' He was concerned to create the possibility of long term support, *'I not looking for the 'Super Head; I'm looking for someone who is in it for the long haul, not a personal crusade but supportive and built on trust.'*

Once identified, the 'matched' heads met with the Astrologers to discuss the possibilities of partnership working. All of the partnerships were brokered by the Astrologers. The three that are classified here as 'natural' partnerships, had a history of some form of collaborative working prior to the partnership strategy; the other three were 'arranged' by the Astrologers. Further details of the individual pairings are given in individual case studies in Part 2.

Natural and Arranged Partnerships.

Natural Partnership	Arranged Partnership
Capricorn-Sagittarius	Cancer-Aquarius
Virgo-Leo	Aries-Gemini
Libra-Taurus	Pisces-Scorpio

Table 4

Stage 2 Developing the partnerships. Planting the seeds, watering and nurturing.

From this initial meeting the Astrologers expected the partnerships to move forward with the production of an Improvement Plan for the SCC to include partnership activities and costs; these were to be monitored by the SLA. Schools were then to be left to decide on activities and formalise a contract. The Head of AIS believed this freedom was essential, *'different heads need different things, one partnership may involve strategic planning, maybe mentoring and coaching, in another school it could be KS3 and a commitment to pool resources.'*

The Head of AIS believed the strategy was not 'out side in,' as schools were *'invited to join;'* however she accepted SCC were unlikely to refuse, *'they are never*

really going to like it, but they want to be seen in a positive light.' She believed the strategy had many attractions, stating *'it is an opportunity to work closely with an effective school, it offers a resource and between £20,000 and £45,000 to each partnership; they may have reservations but there are benefits; they all have problems and issues that they are trying to address.'* She expected the relationship to be challenging, *'we don't want too much chummy collusion; this strategy is a mixture of pressure and support. We don't want them to shout at each other but the relationship could become really comfortable and nice and that's not what they need.'*

Stage 3 Incorporation. Harvesting the fruits

At the outset the expectation was that greater improvement will be seen with SCC than would otherwise be achieved through AIS support alone. The partnership model was rooted in strengthening of leadership and management in the SCC and the expectation that systems and policies would transfer to improve performance at classroom level. While there may also be benefits for the effective schools, the Astrologers made it clear this was not the primary objective, *'we are not about very good schools getting better! This is about disseminating good practice and improving SCC.'* The Principal Adviser believed the effective partner schools were likely to pay lip service to 'two way' improvement, *'it's a bit of a pretext; partner heads are very skilled at handling the two way idea of both benefiting.'* Furthermore he believed that the partners were indeed not 'equal,' *'this is after all about supporting SCC to get out of the 'cause for concern' category, not improving our effective schools.'*

Stage 4 Looking back, looking forward.

At this stage LEA Officers reflected on the design of the initiative and speculated as to any potential issues. The findings from the research will reveal the extent to which their beliefs were well founded or not. The Head of AIS believed the greatest potential

weakness was the partnership being treated as a low priority, *'Heads are very busy; it may be low on the agendas of both schools, it may be one of the things they are doing, not the major thing!'* She was also concerned about the initial time frame and the complexity of the strategy, *'it has already taken over six months to set these partnerships up! It may take months for some differences to be noted; this isn't a simple solution and it certainly isn't a quick fix!'* The Principal Adviser was also concerned that as the SCC already received substantial support from the LEA, the National Strategies and other schools, they may not have the capacity to coordinate and benefit from the additional partnership support.

Summary

The Astrologers believed they were responding positively to the need identified by Woods and Cribb (2001) for LEAs to refocus and re-culture their services. The partnership strategy was in line with Bentley (2003) as it endorsed the view that previous practice has not always brought improvement in SCC and was based on the belief that collaboration between schools could hasten improvement. Furthermore the strategy was premised on the view that the LEA had neither the capacity nor the capability to improve SCC on its own (DfEE 2000). Despite the assertion to the contrary, the initiative was essentially 'top down' and a strategy that SCC were unlikely to refuse. It sought to harness the expertise of effective schools initially through the head teacher as an agent of change as suggested by Harris (2002); with the intention of improving SCC as Gray (2000) asserts from the 'bottom up' through the involvement of other members of staff. The Astrologers believed they had successfully brokered the partnerships by strengthening those that already had a 'natural' association through previous collaboration and 'arranging' new ones. The building of a good relationship between the 'partner' headteachers was not seen as

important however provided the partnership had positive impact. There was concern that the SCC may not see partnership as a priority or have the capacity to make best use of the support offered given the initial time constraints.

The partnership strategy as set out by the Astrologers was based on a number of shared beliefs and assumptions and these are summarised below:-

Beliefs and Assumptions shared by the Astrologers

- Current AIS strategies for supporting SCC are not robust and have limited success.
- Systems, practices and policies can be transferred from 'effective' schools to SCC.
- The LEA can identify suitable partners, broker effective partnerships and hold them to account.
- Effective schools (particularly ex-Grant Maintained schools), with high profile headteachers make suitable partners for SCC; they have systems and models that work and these can be driven through SCC.
- Effective school have the time, expertise and capacity to engage productively and know how to support improvement in SCC.
- SCC will want to work with 'effective' schools.
- Over time some of the major issues in SCC are amenable to solution through collaborative activities.

Table 5a

Many of the issues these beliefs and assumptions raise are present in the research questions and will be analysed later. In addition there are a number of inconsistencies between the views of the Astrologers that raise questions about the setting up of the partnership strategy and in particular the involvement of the SLAs:-

Inconsistencies between the views of the Astrologers

- Is the partnership strategy a 'robust intervention' or a 'voluntary' activity?
- Is the strategy 'high profile' or 'low key'?
- Are partner schools 'driving' improvement or 'supporting' improvement in SCC? Is partnership about pressure or support?
- Do the headteachers in the partnerships necessarily need to like or hold each other in high professional regard?
- To what extent are partnerships two way?

Table 5b

The questions these inconsistencies raised are reflected on in the next section as they contributed to the uncertainties that SLAs held about the strategy. Furthermore they raised issues to be explored with the schools in Part 2 and addressed later in analyses in Chapter 5. I believed the criticisms made about the Advisory Service were harsh and largely unsubstantiated. In addition, I felt the rationale for the selection of 'effective' partners was dubious and made no reference to existing SESI research about transfer of practice and selection of partners. My concerns about the extent to which my beliefs and values affect the validity and trustworthy nature of my representation of the 'Astrologers' view' was addressed at least in part by triangulation with the views and perceptions of the SLAs.

(b) The School Link Advisers' views.

The School Link Adviser (SLA), linked to the SCC in each partnership was expected to contribute to a Partnership Plan and then monitor and evaluate progress. Each school on the SCC register already had a LEA Support Plan, devised by the SLA and it was envisaged that the Partnership Plan would become part of this initial support plan. In total four SLAs (identified: 1-4 in the analysis below) were involved in the six partnerships; with two SLAs each linked to two partnerships.

In the summer term 2002, I initiated the email conversations described earlier in Chapter 3, with the four SLAs. The aim was to track their involvement in the brokering and selection process and their understanding of their roles within the developing partnership strategy. I was particularly interested in the involvement of the four SLAs at the initial stage of the partnership initiative. From my previous experience of LEA projects, communications between the principal officers and the advisers were not always clear and as an adviser I was often vague about what role I was expected to play. Some of these email conversations with SLAs appear in full in

Appendix 4 p.232; but a few key comments are selected here to capture their individual beliefs and perspectives about the partnerships they were linked to.

1. The Capricorn-Sagittarius Partnership

SLA (1) reported having, *'limited contact with setting up the partnership.'* He had some idea about the partnership strategy because of involvement with the Virgo-Leo partnership, but was not sure why or how this particular partnership had been set up, *'we really need a set of guidelines or protocols to set up the partnerships and make our role clear.'* He was aware of the negative attitude of the head of The Capricorn School, *'he feels it is forced upon him, he isn't enthusiastic; the last time I spoke to him he did not seem to be aware of what the partnership plan contains!'*

In the absence of clear guidelines, SLA (1) assumed his first task was to help the schools align the LEA Support Plan with the Partnership Plan and broker LEA support. He met with the deputies from both schools and a joint plan emerged (Appendix 5 p.238). However the deputy from Sagittarius did most of the preparatory work.

2. The Cancer-Aquarius Partnership

SLA (2) was not involved with forming this partnership and only found out by accident, *'The Principal Adviser asked me to discuss partnership with the head last September (2001), but typically I have had no involvement at all.'* Furthermore he revealed, *'I don't know how or why The Aquarius School was chosen to partner The Cancer School; at this stage I don't know what is expected from me.'*

3. The Aries-Gemini Partnership

SLA (3) was not involved in setting up the partnership, *'I have no concrete information about this initiative it; this is definitely a Principal Adviser led activity.'* She felt the head of the Aries was already resistant to the partnership initiative, *'It will*

only work when the head in the SCC is receptive to ideas and feels equally responsible for driving the partnership.'

4. The Virgo-Leo Partnership

These two schools had already been working together for some time and SLA (1) was involved in their partnership discussions and plans. He knew more about his expected role, *'I went to an early meeting with the Leo head, the head designate of The Virgo School and the officers to discuss the scope of the partnership; it is now up to me to see it on it's way.'*

5. The Libra-Taurus Partnership

SLA (4) was involved in early discussions between the Head of AIS, the Principal Adviser and the partner headteachers. However he did not believe that this was a good match as the head of Taurus has a dominant personality and was likely to undermine the Libra head.

6. The Pisces-Scorpio Partnership

SLA (4) was not involved in planning the partnership and when asked about how and why the partnership was set up, he stated frankly, *'I haven't a clue; the Principal Adviser organised it. The head of The Pisces School is reluctant to talk about it, seems to put more faith in her 'other' partner.'* As SLA for two of the partnerships, he was not optimistic about the strategy, *'I have not seen one that worked yet!! Not in this authority; too much baggage and mistrust!'* Furthermore he was concerned that there was a lack of clarity, *'it all seems a bit hap hazard; nothing new there!'*

Summary

The involvement of the four SLAs with the LEA officers and the headteachers in the discussion around setting up the partnerships was variable. At best SLAs were involved in early discussions about two of the partnerships but none had involvement

in the key activity of selecting the partners. There was a limited understanding about how to monitor or hold to account and no clear expectations about the focus or impact of the strategy beyond aligning new plans with existing plans. For the advisers, this strategy represented another 'top down' initiative and as such did not model the partnership behaviours it was seeking to espouse. The lack of involvement at this initial stage was likely to limit the possibility of the SLA's acting as an agent of change within the partnership strategy, 'able to contribute directly to capacity building or support change' (Harris 2002 p.57). It also seems that although there had been a change in leadership at the top of AIS, the service was still identified as having poor communication and lack of involvement.

The strategy grew out from the Astrologers' belief that the SLAs lacked the ability to challenge and intervene in SCC yet it was set up in a way that appeared to further marginalise the SLA through lack of clarity about their expected role. Where SLAs had early involvement in the partnership they believed it could support improvement; those not involved believed it was unlikely to succeed particularly when the headteacher was not behind the partnership idea and/or felt forced into it.

(c) Monitoring and evaluation

Within the partnership initiative, my particular role was to monitor and evaluate progress across the six partnerships, to provide updates at SLA meetings each half-term, to write reports for the Principal Adviser and organise partnership network conferences. I was able to visit the schools and carry out interviews throughout the four terms of the initiative.

Over time the four SLAs became increasingly dependent upon my reports to up date them on what was happening in the partnerships. I had time each term to meet with headteachers and other senior staff in the partnership schools but the SLAs had

limited opportunity to visit the SCC, some had no involvement with the 'effective' partner schools except at the partnership conferences and where there were partnership management group meetings. Throughout the autumn term (2002) and the spring term (2003), the frequency and content of the email conversations with SLAs revealed that they knew little about the actual partnership activities; this was confirmed at Adviser meetings.

Conclusion

Central to the success of the partnership is the effective matching of schools yet little regard was placed on the relationship that would need to build between the partner heads. Furthermore the belief that the Astrologers had effectively partnered SCC with 'effective' schools was challenged by the SLAs. The Astrologers did not involve the SLAs in the process of matching and brokering the partnerships to support the improvement of the very schools they believed they know well and worked closely with. The strategy clearly identified the 'effective' head as the potential agent of change, as the SLAs were marginalised through lack of involvement and clarity about their expected role. The inconsistencies that existed between the Astrologers themselves as to the intentions of the initiative further underlined the lack of clarity over the principles and practices that underpinned the partnership strategy.

I have reflected on the possibility that I had formed a somewhat negative view of the LEAs attempts to set up the initiative, but my views are in accord with the SLAs. There was increasing scepticism about the LEAs ability to successfully match and broker the partnerships, lack of clarity about the SLA role as 'agent of change' and growing uncertainty about the likely success of the initiative.

The extent to which this emerging view of the partnership strategy aligns with the perspectives of the schools involved is now analysed through the six case studies.

Key research questions relating to the brokering of effective partnerships, transfer of systems and practices and the establishment of collaborative activities that would support ‘inside out’ capacity development are now analysed

Part 2 The Six Partnership Case Studies

Part 2 contains the six partnership Case Studies. Each case study provides background information for the schools and the rationale for their inclusion in the partnership strategy. The progress of each partnership is again represented as sequential stages in the organic growth model as used already in Part 1 to chart the process of setting up the partnership strategy and address the research questions (Table 3b below).

Stages of development and Research Questions: schools

Stages of development	Research Questions
Stage 1. Setting up the partnerships. Preparing the ground and deciding what needs to be done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is the LEA at matching schools and brokering partnerships that support improvement in SCC. • Will a special professional relationship, founded on mutual trust, build between the head of the SCC and their LEA chosen partner?
Stage 2. Developing the partnership. Planting the seeds, watering and nurturing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What part will the effective head and/or the LSA play as possible agents of change? • How far does the initiative manage to integrate a ‘top down’ approach with ‘inside out’ development? • Will the SCC accept the need for change and build capacity for improvement?
Stage 3. Incorporation. Harvesting the fruits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are systems and practices transferable and what impact (if any) is there in both SCC and effective school? • Can partnership continue effectively for either school during the period of Ofsted inspection and post-inspection?
Stage 4. Looking back, looking forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the period immediately following a damaging Ofsted inspection an appropriate time to seek to form a partnership? • Can teachers from ostensibly different schools develop a shared understanding of what needs to be done to improve partner schools?

Table 3b

Stage 1 in the summer term 2002, focuses on the beliefs and perceptions of the

partners heads as to the potential of the partnership strategy and their discussions and plans for collaborative working as they ‘prepare the ground, plan and deciding what needs to be done.’ The following term centres on the early stages of collaborative working between the partner schools; here headteachers (and in some cases their partnership managers) seek to secure plans, suggest areas for useful collaboration and encourage others to engage as they ‘plant the seeds, water and nurture.’ Stage 3, in the Spring term, aims to uncover where and if partnership working has been incorporated into strategies for improvement; where early gains and benefits of partnership working are evident; where they are able to ‘harvest the fruits’ of partnership. Stage 4 (summer 2003) reflects on the three terms of partnership work and clarifies plans for future partnership and collaborative work. These stages of development and the research questions provided the focus for the interviews carried out each term in the partnership schools (Appendices 2&3 pp. 220-227).

Case Study 1 Capricorn - Sagittarius

Background to the Partnership

LEA concern for The Capricorn School reached a critical stage in June 2001 when the School Governing Body accepted the late resignation of the headteacher and released him to join a school in a neighbouring authority. As one deputy head was also leaving and the other was part-time, the school was left in a very vulnerable position due to the change of the Senior Management Team (SMT). The Governors planned to recruit for January 2002 but relied on the LEA to provide a management team for September 2001.

During the summer term, the Principal Adviser secured the secondment of the head of The Sagittarius to be acting headteacher of The Capricorn School for the autumn term 2001. A deputy head from another LEA school was also seconded to join

the SMT. The situation became even more critical when Ofsted announced their intention to inspect the school in October 2001.

The Capricorn School is an average sized, 11-16 mixed Church of England Comprehensive School in a large rural town close to the County border. It is the only secondary school in the town but is close to a number of selective schools. The town is reasonably affluent although there are pockets of relative disadvantage. The school has less than 900 pupils and is undersubscribed. Pupils come from a wide area and a wide variety of backgrounds. About 10% of the pupils are entitled to FSM and 19% have SEN. The PANDA Report for 2002 indicates that the pupil attainment is below national average at KS3 and well below average at KS4. (Table 1a & 1b pp. 20-21)

The Sagittarius School is a large, 11-18 mixed comprehensive situated in an advantaged area 20 miles from The Capricorn School. There are over 1450 pupils at the school, including 250 in the Sixth Form. The school is popular and oversubscribed. Pupils come from a wide area including surrounding villages and nearby towns. The intake of the school is fairly balanced, with 8% of the students having SEN and 6% FSM. The PANDA Report for 2002 indicates that pupil attainment at KS3 and K4 is well above the National average. (Table 1a & 1b pp 20-21) The Ofsted Report 2001 (URN 115232) confirmed that Sagittarius was a good school. Leadership and management are identified as being very good and focused on improving teaching and learning.

The first two months of the autumn term 2001 were very busy for The Capricorn School. While the acting head prepared for the Ofsted Inspection, the Governors sought to recruit a new headteacher. In October the seconded deputy was appointed headteacher from January 2002.

The Report following the Inspection acknowledged this unsettled period but noted the relative stability brought by the acting head. However the Report highlighted the steady and marked decline in pupils' attainment and placed the school in the 'underachieving' category.

The partnership which the LEA brokered between The Sagittarius School and The Capricorn School is significant as it grew out of the contingency arrangements designed to meet needs of the previous term (autumn 2001). The Twinning Plan (Appendix 5 p.238) confirmed the determination of the Sagittarius head to continue her association with The Capricorn School and work in partnership with Capricorn head. This was a convenient strategy and a seemingly natural partnership.

Stage 1. Setting up the partnership, 'preparing the ground' and deciding what needs to be done. (summer term 2002)

In summer 2002 the head of Capricorn was coming to grips with his first headship and was in his own terms *'lukewarm about the partnership.'* Although he gave commitment to the partnership he admitted there had been little more than *'the odd 'phone call'* between him and his partner head. His priority was to establish himself as the new head of the school, *'the relationship has changed; before I had to work with her when she was acting head here, now she has to work with me as a partner.'* He accepted the possibility that schools could benefit from working together, but he was particularly unhappy with the mentoring relationship set out in the plan, *'it is not a priority for me; to be honest I prefer to work with other heads, I have my own contacts.'* The head of The Capricorn School revealed tensions within this partnership from the start, *'she has a view of this school, but it is a view with baggage; the question is, will we be able to get on now the relationship has changed?'* The partnership grew out of the secondment period; he was not given the

choice of partner or mentor and although he maintained he could have said 'no' he was still cautious, *'I have been involved in initiatives before, they start, take up your time and then fizzle out.'*

By contrast the head of The Sagittarius School was very enthusiastic about the partnership; driven by the commitments she wrote into The Capricorn School's Action Plan. She stated firmly *'a lot can be learned from schools not in competition. We have the capacity to be more proactive and help The Capricorn School. It's not about us showing how to do it, it's about dialogue. We have them in our development plan.'* She had worked for several years in a consortium with her local feeder schools and her neighbouring secondary school and believed in the benefits of collaborative working, *'it has huge potential for school improvement.'*

The head of The Sagittarius School felt the partnership was inevitable given her previous commitment to The Capricorn School; she would never have said 'no' to the opportunity. She was aware that the head of The Capricorn School placed the partnership low in his priorities but she was determined and believed she had the ability to *'keep him on track.'* She believed she was sensitive to the new head's situation, *'the relationship needs to be supportive but not patronising; giving him space to set out his own stall.'* She was sure that as an 'effective' school Sagittarius would be a good partner school but the Capricorn head was half-hearted and remained unconvinced about the potential for collaboration. They both stressed the importance of keeping Governors on board but the head of The Sagittarius School had difficulty convincing her Governing Body about the benefit of the partnership, *'they quite rightly ask what responsibility they have for pupils in another town; they don't necessarily see that it is important professional development for me and my staff.'* As a result the partnership had a fairly low profile in both schools.

The reluctance of the Capricorn head to be mentored by his partner had potential to be a major barrier to the partnership development. *'This is a real issue,'* explained the Sagittarius head, *'we are very different personalities; he has a very different style from me.'* She also believed that the Capricorn staff wanted her to remain as headteacher after her period as acting head, *'this makes it very tricky; he knows that they wanted me to stay.'* Although this was a real issue, the Astrologers seemed to assume this was a good match, whereas at a personal and professional level it was very questionable.

Stage 2 Developing the partnership-‘Planting the seeds, watering and nurturing’ (autumn term 2002)

In the autumn term the Capricorn head seemed more positive about the partnership, *'it has evolved so much more and has moved on; I see it as 'two way' now and I am much less sceptical.'* Responsibility for the partnership had been devolved to a partnership manager in each school and the Capricorn head seemed pleased to step back and let others deal with partnership arrangements. He was pleased to report that the joint training day went well, the ASTs were meeting together and his SMT was invited to join the SMT from The Sagittarius School for 'future's planning.' He was adamant however that this did not necessarily mean that their ideas would be used, *'we have different priorities here; we need our own strategies; we won't join in all that is offered.'* The Capricorn head appeared more comfortable with this more distant relationship, *'I don't have to ask her advice and I don't have her as my mentor.'*

Perhaps not surprisingly the head of Sagittarius was less happy with partnership activities. She was particularly concerned that her mentoring role had not developed and she believed 'her' teachers who were doing all the work and 'his' teachers were not taking the ideas up. She was particularly concerned that she now

met with the partnership manager from The Capricorn School and not the headteacher. She had however formed a good relationship with this deputy while acting head and they already met privately to discuss his progress, *'I know what needs to be done, but he sees it differently. He is not building his team. There are areas that he is weak on, but he is neglecting these. He is trying to be strategic, while coping day to day; it's all a bit last minute.'* The Sagittarius head was still confident in her ability to support and saw any partnership weaknesses as being down to her partner head, *'I am good at mentoring and coaching, but he doesn't see it!'* The certainty that she *'knows what needs to be done,'* and the involvement in the *'private'* meetings with his partnership manager however were likely to be barriers to developing trust and partnership.

Meetings with others

During the autumn term (2002) the partnership managers were interviewed. Both seemed pleased with the partnership developments. The Capricorn manager was particularly positive, *'it is really good; schools don't often get the opportunities to work this way; it opens your eyes.'* The partnership managers felt they worked well together; they had revised the original partnership plan (Appendix 5 p.238) and were trying to ensure that the impact of the plan moved closer to the classroom. They believed both schools were mainly positive about the partnership activities but recognised some *'local difficulties.'* The Academic Tutor from The Sagittarius School visited The Capricorn School in September 2002 to discuss and compare procedures for collecting pupil data, target setting and tracking. Three months later, she was very disappointed that there was no progress following the joint activity, *'I feel like I have wasted my time; I have lots to get on with here without travelling there for no effect.'* While the tutors from The Capricorn School seemed receptive to sharing and

developing new systems, nothing was tried out or introduced, nothing transferred. The Academic Tutor from The Sagittarius School explained her frustration, *'I thought what we had agreed to do was really clear, it was to me, but not to them!'* She was prepared for the dangers of being too prescriptive, *'we were asked not to be too top down, we worked together and decided what needed to be done, but it didn't happen; they said they did not have the support from senior management to get it going; clearly they aren't self starters.'*

The partnership manager in The Sagittarius School received written reports following each partnership visit and was aware of his staff feeling they had wasted their time. He was concerned that if he reported this lack of progress to his headteacher and she took it up with The Capricorn head it could jeopardise future working, *'the last thing we want to do is to seem arrogant or imposing, but where is the accountability?'* He knew the initiative needed time and careful handling, *'we must take care not to overwhelm them. They need time to work through our systems and personalise them. Support can be strengthening but can also be dis-empowering.'* He also noted that maintaining the 'partnership of equals' had become increasingly difficult, *'we started out working together as equals, but it has become us giving, them taking and then doing nothing with it; staff here are feeling they are wasting their time.'*

There was also a major issue about releasing Capricorn staff to visit The Sagittarius School. The partnership manager from The Capricorn School explained, *'every time we release staff it affects other staff and puts pressure on the school and we are already struggling.'*

Stage 3 Incorporation, ‘harvesting the fruits.’ (spring 2003)

During the spring term two significant events changed the situation dramatically for The Capricorn School and the partnership. The Ofsted visit (February 2003) to monitor progress against the Action Plan resulted in The Capricorn School being placed in special measures (Ofsted Report 115236). The report made no reference to the work of the partnership. The schools also learnt that the funding for the partnership would cease in April 2003 and be replaced with the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG). This grant would come to The Capricorn School and the head would then decide if he wanted to continue to fund the partnership with The Sagittarius School after April 2003.

Due to unfortunate circumstances the spring term meetings with the headteachers were disrupted. The Sagittarius head was in hospital and the Capricorn head was not available due to a mix up in his diary.

The meeting with the partnership manager in The Sagittarius School confirmed that activities have *‘come to a grinding halt.’* Activities were initially suspended as The Capricorn School prepared for Ofsted and since going into special measures partnership activities have ceased altogether. He believed morale was very low in the Capricorn school, *‘I don’t think they could believe it, but the evidence was all there.’* He was convinced that the partnership plan had identified the right issues but The Capricorn School had not worked on them and were largely unprepared for the Ofsted Inspection. He believed this was largely down to poor management, *‘there is a mismatch between what the management of the school thought was going on and what is actually being done; good intentions but nothing changing on the ground.’* This was also very disheartening for the Sagittarius staff as they believed they had wasted their time. *‘Capricorn teachers turn up not knowing why they were there or*

what they were supposed to be doing; our teachers are now reluctant to give up any more of their time.'

The partnership manager from the Sagittarius school believed nothing had transferred and was alarmed that the school they are trying to improve had gone into special measures. He believed The Sagittarius School had derived some benefit however, *'we have reflected on our practices and improved some of our systems; visiting them raised questions about our practices which we have now acted upon.'*

Stage 4 'Looking back and looking forward. (summer 2003)

At the summer term interview the Capricorn head looked uncomfortable in his chair, he was guarded and reluctant to talk about the partnership or special measures. He dismissed the Ofsted judgement, *'they got it wrong; they hit us on a bad day.'* He remained unconvinced about the benefits of time spent on partnership working, *'it isn't a priority for me, it is artificial; there is real danger in taking something off the shelf that might be inappropriate.'* Despite his reservations he somewhat surprisingly planned to continue in partnership, *'I have named The Sagittarius School in our new Action Plan, and I am now working with the other LIG schools.'*

The Capricorn partnership manager was more forthcoming; she believed going into special measures had *'pulled the school together.'* She was pleased there was now a structured Action Plan that combined the support of The Sagittarius School with the new LIG Collaborative. She felt that the partnership had established a positive way of working between the schools, *'it has not achieved much yet, but we have got a way of working.'* The way of working had changed however, *'there is no talk about 'two way' anymore, it is now focused on our Action Plan, driven and funded by us.'*

The Sagittarius head was really frustrated by lack of impact from the time spent promoting the partnership, *'we went to a lot of effort and individuals there haven't done a thing, we spent time talking; we had a real feeling that we were giving, but they weren't acting.'* She was left with a number of questions, *'Were we doing something useful? Was it a waste of time? Was the help we offered inappropriate? Was it simply that they could not deliver?'*

Despite this frustration and lack of impact, the head of The Sagittarius School still believed in partnership but asserted *'it needs 100% commitment and the leadership of the head.'* She was never convinced about the Capricorn head's ability to work collaboratively, *'he feels the partnership was all foisted on him, he is not an easy person to help.'* She did not consider that her behaviours may have contributed to his reluctance to engage.

The partnership manager from the Sagittarius School was similarly despondent, *'we are now on our third Action Plan, it gets going and then it stops.'* He was slightly more optimistic that this plan unlike the others would deliver, *'this new plan is more focussed for them and I know we will deliver our part.'* He hoped the Capricorn staff would now take their support more seriously, *'there has been a changeover in staff and there is more of an air of acceptance that they need to do things differently.'* He concluded that more time was needed, *'this is not a quick fix, we may need to stay longer and work along side them.'*

Summary

The Capricorn School was experiencing a testing time following an unsettled period and fall in standards; as Gray (2000) identified, 'schools in trouble have troubled histories (p. 5) The short term appointment of an experienced acting head appeared to have halted the decline temporarily but the new head was unable to continue the

improvement. The Capricorn School has the characteristics of a sinking school (Stoll and Fink 1996), lacking the capacity to improve (Stoll 1999); isolated and blaming others for the situation, in a downward spiral fuelled by resistance to change (Myers and Goldstein, 1998). The underachieving label was compounded by special measures and although as Matthews and Sammons (2004) note this can prove to be a 'lever for change' in this case the Capricorn head dismissed the judgment asserting '*they got it wrong!*' As Pugh (1998) also notes, schools placed in 'special measures' need to pass through anger and denial before constructive possibilities for change emerge.

The ground for partnership was not well prepared and the SLA, who knew that The Capricorn Head had little interest in this partnership, had little involvement in the process. For although the Sagittarius School seemed to the Astrologers to be a 'natural' partner, there was too much history and baggage between the headteachers for this to ever be an effective partnership and a special professional relationship did not grow. The Capricorn head did not see the partnership as a priority but rather a 'bolt on;' he was prepared to give sufficient 'lip service' to the initiative, to secure funding by appearing engaged; a characteristic identified by Hopkins *et al.* (1997) and Gray (2000). The LEA failed to see these issues when brokering the partnership and although identified as potential blockages by the SLA at an early stage, nothing was done to mediate the situation.

The Capricorn head appeared intimidated, pressured and even overwhelmed by the success of the 'experienced' partner. He did not want to engage with her and clearly wanted to select his own mentor if he believed he needed one. In common with other new heads he preferred to get to grips with the job in his own way as highlighted by Bright and Ware (2003) and Hobson *et al* (2003). The Sagittarius head was driven by her belief that she was an agent of change and knew what to do to turn

the school around; she was convinced that the Capricorn head did not have the capability to do it himself. As Timperley and Robinson (2003) suggest, the tendency of one partner to dominate, and the belief she held that he was not pulling his weight (Lownsborough and Huber 2003) were causes of tension in the partnership from the outset.

Relationships between the schools at other levels were cordial but the Capricorn teachers appeared unable and/or reluctant to implement new ideas. They were preoccupied with coping day to day as in Hargreave's 'survivalist' culture (1995 p.28) using what Louis and Miles (1992) refer to as 'shallow coping strategies' (p.8). Sagittarius staff were better prepared for the sensitivities of partnership working and the need for other teachers to come to grips with change but nevertheless soon felt frustrated by the lack of response and loss of time in their own school. As Ghouri (1999) also identified, they felt under pressure to maintain their already high standards in their own school. Although a positive relationship developed between the partnership managers, the teachers in the partner schools did not develop a shared understanding of what needed to be done.

During the run up to the Ofsted Inspection (February 2003) partnership activities were suspended and were not revived during the period immediately following going into 'special measures.' Repeated and revised Action Plans failed to create the culture for improvement in the SCC. Although the processes for collaboration were developed by the partnership managers, the essential structure and rationale identified by Handscomb (2004) was not established.

At the end of the initial partnership period there was little evidence of any transfer of practice to the Capricorn School. As Hargreaves (1998) points out 'transfer occurs when knowledge from one teacher is converted into practice of the other' (pp

46-47). However it appeared that Sagittarius staff had benefited from the opportunity to 'reflect on their procedures and practices' (Harris, 2002 p.103) and had engaged with some limited participant learning, as identified by Guskey (2000).

It seemed that the partnership was unlikely to continue. Lack of enthusiasm and commitment from the Capricorn head and lack of engagement by the Capricorn staff fostered disillusionment and disappointment in the effective partner. The Sagittarius head seemed unaware of the part she played in the gradual debacle; she seemed tired of the relationship and was likely to disengage.

Case Study 2. The Cancer-Aquarius partnership

Background to the partnership

The Cancer School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive, situated in the south of the County. The 1000 pupils at the school are drawn from a wide area and the roll is falling. Although FSM at 23% the percentage of pupils with SEN is above national average; the number with statements of SEN is broadly average although the proportion of pupils on stages of assessment is relatively high. Attendance is very low in comparison with national averages (Table 1a p.20).

The Ofsted Report May 1998 (URN: 115333) raised a number of concerns as progress was judged to be limited. The report highlighted areas for improvement related to teaching and learning and raising attainment. The PANDA report for 2002 indicated that attainment was below national averages at KS3 and well below at KS4. When compared with similar school based on FSM, attainment at KS3 was slightly better than at KS4 where it remained well below average (Table 1a & 1b pp. 20-21).

The Aquarius School is a Mixed (11-19) comprehensive with just over 1000, situated to the north of the County Town about 30 miles from the Cancer School. The roll has increased steadily and the school is oversubscribed. The intake is drawn from

a wide radius with about a third of the pupils bussed in. The intake is broadly average ability with a relatively low number of FSM (7%). The proportion of pupils on the SEN register is about average at 21%. The Ofsted Report (UNR 115345) May 1999 reported that The Aquarius School *'is a good school, with many more strengths than weaknesses.'* In particular leadership and management were judged to be very good. The PANDA report for 2002 indicated that attainment was above national averages compared with all schools at KS3 and KS4. When compared with similar schools based on FSM, however attainment at KS3 and KS4 was below average (Table 1a & 1b pp. 20-21).

The LEA had been concerned about The Cancer School for some time prior to the start of the partnership. The lack of progress in raising attainment, falling rolls and the low numbers being attracted into the Sixth Form lead to the school being placed on the LEAs Register of SCC in 2001. When partnership was first discussed in spring term 2002, the then headteacher had already decided to retire.

The head of The Aquarius School was very interested in working with a 'failing' school, *'I have been headteacher here for nearly twelve years, and I like the idea of taking over a SCC; I want to see how my school would run if I wasn't there.'*

The meeting with the Principal Adviser and the Aquarius head in the spring term agreed he would support the outgoing head in his final term and the deputy as acting head in the summer term. There was also the opportunity of working with the new headteacher after appointment in the autumn Term. It was planned that the other senior managers would meet and discuss issues and concerns.

The Aquarius head could see how his role was likely to need to change over time, *'I will be able to be quite direct with the acting head, but with the new*

headteacher it will be a different situation. It will depend on how much the new head wants to work with us.'

The Cancer-Aquarius partnership is a significant case as it was arranged with the out-going headteacher, adapted for the acting-head and inherited by the new headteacher.

Stage 1. Building the relationship. Preparing the ground and deciding what needs to be done. (summer 2002)

The acting head of Cancer School was delighted by the support he had received from his partner head, *'it is absolutely invaluable, he has helped me to keep calm, to keep things steady.'* The acting head felt both schools faced similar issues, *'they have tackled the problems we are facing, like low 6th Form numbers and being less popular in the local community, and they have managed to change it.'* He was aware that some Cancer teachers had misgivings about the partnership, *'they think this shows them up as the worst school and they don't like that.'*

The Aquarius head was concerned to give the right kind of support, *'I must remember it is not my role to tell them what to do; my role is to boost confidence, make contacts and raise morale. Change needs to be driven from within and that is the new head's agenda.'* He was confident that his school would be a good partner, *'we are now oversubscribed, our results are rising; most importantly we have effective systems for sharing and talking through.'*

The Aquarius head believed trust was more likely to build through a relationship that was flexible and not too prescriptive, *'we don't need performance targets for this sort of support; we need to be something of an oasis for them, somewhere they can come to talk, somewhere safe; we must not be patronising or*

judgemental.' As many of the teachers from The Cancer School had only worked at that one school he believed it was important for them to see how things were different in another school, *'they may see things are not be as bad as they think.'* The acting head of The Cancer School also believed that Aquarius teachers could learn from them too and insisted, *'we must be treated as equals and not the failing school.'* He was convinced that over time seeing what works in Aquarius will help them develop a more positive approach.

During the first term, an active mentoring relationship developed between the two heads and the SMTs met to discuss partnership work. At this stage it seemed that the Aquarius School was driving the partnership although it was thought this was likely to change with the arrival of the new headteacher.

Care was taken to develop the partnership in a way that did not threaten either school. Partnership was introduced very quietly by the Aquarius head; he did not want his staff to think of The Cancer School as 'failing.' He prepared his staff for partnership working, *'I told them to try to strengthen and not dis-empower, not make judgements and work together. This is the beginning of real intervention support work.'* The acting head of the Cancer School was also careful to keep the partnership low key, *'morale is not good; some staff are resistant and are not interested in looking at what they do.'* Overall the heads wanted a partnership which was high on support but low in challenge. They were concerned not to pressure, damage or undermine staff confidence, *'the friendly approach, the critical friend, is all about support, the pressure will come from Ofsted.'*

Stage 2 Developing the partnership-‘planting the seeds, watering and nurturing’ (autumn 2002)

The arrival of the new headteacher marked a critical phase in the partnership development. The new head had not been involved in creating the partnership. She was clear from the start that unlike the acting head, she did not want to be mentored, *‘mentoring is about one being better; I don’t like the idea of mentoring, there is an implication there that I am not quite on top of the job.’* She said she was not uncomfortable about being in a partnership but she had her own interpretation about how it would work, *‘it’s good to have someone to bounce ideas with, better than being ‘done to’ by the LEA.’* She was open to the possibility that partnership may support improvement and was pleased about relationships so far, *‘it doesn’t feel like it is being done to and there seems to be something in it for both sides.’*

The head of Cancer said she needed time to get to know her school and for her staff to get to know her; *‘I am the only change they have had in some time, there are great expectations that things will be different.’* At this stage she had not yet met her partner, *‘I have not had enough time to contact him so it is not yet a close relationship.’* Relationships between other members of the SMT had more time to build and she believed that may be a developing strength.

The head of The Aquarius School was aware that some planned activities had not taken place but he understood that the new head had more pressing matters to deal with, *‘she has many things on her mind; we shall wait for when she is ready.’* In the meantime he was working behind the scenes, *‘I have tried to keep it on the boil; I have the ASTs and the leading mathematician working together and arranged for all members of their SMT to visit here.’* He felt these meetings were important, *‘it helps them to believe they aren’t alone and this has helped with morale.’* The partnership

remained focused upon support, *'there isn't much two way yet; they need time to get the relationships right.'*

The Aquarius head believed the main obstacle to progress was the change over at headship level, *'I have worked with three head teachers in this partnership in as many months! All have different agendas; each time I have to start building relationships again. We still need to develop trust and openness.'*

The two heads viewed the partnership quite differently. The new head appeared outcomes driven, anxious to move her school on, but cautious about engaging with her partner head. She wanted to use the partnership to strengthen her SMT, and suggested an immediate swap over of deputies. The Aquarius head saw the partnership as forming a supportive relationship in a 'coaching' style; he did not want to weaken his school by swapping over deputies or similar strategies.

By the end of term the senior managers had planned a range of activities for spring 2003 (Appendix 6 p.244) and written into the School Improvement Plan 2002-2003 (Appendix 7 p.247).

Stage 3 Incorporation 'Harvesting the fruits' (spring term 2003.)

By the end of the spring term, the head of The Cancer School was more relaxed about the partnership. She felt more in control and by then had got to know the Aquarius head. The concerning news that the LEA would not fund the partnership beyond April 2003, was tempered by the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) funding for further collaborative working. The Cancer head named The Aquarius School as her partner school in the LIG plan and the relationship again changed direction, *'the LIG money is ours; we decide how to spend it, it is still 'two way' in some respects, but let's be clear, the partnership exists because we have problems.'*

The headteachers agreed a framework for future working; a co-ordinator was appointed and a programme set up for pairing departments and middle managers. The Cancer head had concerns that other initiatives and partnerships were seeking to involve her school, *'there are a multiplicity of partnerships around; we're either living in a partnership heaven or hell!'*

In terms of this partnership the Cancer head revealed that progress in her terms was slow, *'we have not really moved beyond Action Planning, neither of us has time; the question remains how to embed the partnership in the school?'* She was particularly concerned about lack of impact in the classroom, *'If I asked my teachers how they have been influenced in the classroom by any of the partnership activities, most would say, 'what partnership?'* The main benefits so far seemed to have accrued to the deputy heads; they enjoyed working together although others saw little benefit.

In the longer term the Cancer head believed the partnership would have a part to play in strengthening her school but she did not see it as a solution in itself, *'it is not a panacea, we have an Improvement Plan, some will be delivered by the LEA, some internally and some will come through the partnership work.'* She believed the work could eventually impact through the personal and professional relationships that had evolved but she reflected that there is no guarantee that teachers would behave or work differently after partnership work with a colleague in another school. There were concerns in both schools as she identified teachers arriving from The Aquarius School, *'unclear about what they are expected to do,'* and the Aquarius head observed his staff *'frustrated as they don't see any change or improvement resulting from their collaborative work.'*

Other partnership working spring 2003

As stated earlier, an emerging strength was the relationship between the deputy heads working together as partnership managers. The Cancer deputy was very enthusiastic, *'we share the same responsibilities, we have the same philosophy, we meet up and talk about the problems and the situations, we engage in blue sky thinking.'* She believed this had improved her skills and knowledge *'we share good practice, if it works there, it may work here!'* She also believed the relationship has been handled carefully and sensitively, *'no one wants to work in a school that is being done to.'*

The Aquarius deputy was also positive and saw partnership working as *'good professional development.'* He believed that it was important not to go in knowing all the answers, *'transferability is possible but it has to be placed in the context of the other school.'* This became clear when a planned collaboration did not go well, *'our head of department thought the Cancer teachers were arrogant with nothing to learn and they thought she was patronising.'* The Aquarius deputy believed he was able to coach his partner deputy, to introduce her to new and better ways of working.

However she viewed the relationship as a professional exchange, *'we are seen as equals, we are not subservient.'*

Stage 4. 'Looking back and planning forward.' (summer term 2003)

The head of Cancer believed that although progress was limited, the partnership was *'maturing and growing'* and would continue through LIG. She believed she was gradually managing to change how things were being done in her school but was careful not to attribute any of that to the partnership. Indeed her main concern was that while her teachers enjoyed their visits to The Aquarius School, nothing seemed to happen as a result, *'they seem to believe that just going there is doing something to improve this school.'* For her the partnership at this stage was essentially about

'talking through ideas' whereas she needed 'action to increase capacity to improve.' She wanted *'hands on support, with the right people to do specific roles; we don't need this soft stuff.'*

The head of Aquarius believed that the LIG funding would make a big difference to the scope of the partnership; the appointment of a co-ordinator in particular was likely to help build the school's 'capacity' to improve. He still saw his role as a sounding board, *'I act as a critical friend, a coach and a confidante. She is very focused on 'outcomes'; I have tried to persuade her not to be too big on this.'* The schools own evaluation of the partnership (Appendix 8 p.249) identified achievements and further support activities.

Summary

The ground for the partnership was not well prepared by the Astrologers as it was done with the headteacher who was soon to retire and without the involvement of the SLA. The partnership made limited progress as a result of the changes in leadership of The Cancer School and different attitudes towards collaboration and support e.g. although the acting head valued being mentored and welcomed the partnership, in the third term of the partnership the new head needed time to come to terms with the partner she had inherited, saw mentoring as a sign of weakness and kept her distance. The Aquarius head tried to address the concerns that Manthei (1992) and Lownsbrough and Huber (2003) identified concerning teachers' not being prepared for working collaboratively, by identifying with them the sensitivities of partnership working and the anxiety it could cause for the receiving school. In the spirit of MacBeath's 'critical friend' (1999 p.110), he made efforts to try to adapt to the changing needs of The Cancer School and the changing headteachers.

The relationship between the senior colleagues in both schools was cordial but others in The Cancer School believed the partnership labelled them as weak and were resistant to change their practices; characteristics also identified by Myers and Goldstein (1998) and Reynolds (1996). For those who were prepared to get involved, partnership activities seemed to lack clarity and focus; they were unable to implement what they had seen and as a result little transferred.

Over time the 'two way' notion of partnership was replaced by a clearer focus on the improvement of The Cancer School. The new Cancer head was impatient for action and practical support while the partner head was concerned not to weaken his own school and viewed the relationship as essentially that of the 'critical friend' (MacBeath 1998 p.110).

The Cancer School resembled the Myers' 'swaying school' (1998 p.179) as the roll continued to fall, results had not improved and time was running out. It seemed to be 'touch and go' whether The Cancer School would survive let alone improve. The Aquarius head was keen to continue with partnership work as trust was growing between the headteachers and the processes for collaboration were building; however the rationale for working in partnership, an essential element identified by Handscomb (2004) was not understood across the schools.

Case Study 3 The Aries-Gemini Partnership

Background to the partnership

The Aries School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive, situated in a new town in the south of the County. The majority of the 1000 pupils come from an estate where many socio-economic indicators are unfavourable. The percentage of pupils with FSM is above the national average (31%) and attendance is well below national average at 88%. Most pupils arrive with lower than average attainment, 34% are identified as

having SEN and there is high mobility. At the time of the study, the school is in an Educational Action Zone.

The Aries School was one of the first schools in the County to become Grant Maintained and over time grew relatively isolated from the LEA. The Ofsted Inspection in May 2000 (URN 115372) placed the school in special measures and soon after the headteacher resigned. After a short period as acting head, the deputy was appointed headteacher. He did much in the short term to raise morale and build confidence but standards remained low. Concern had grown as the school did not engage with the activities of the EAZ and the PANDA report (2002) confirmed that it remained in the bottom 5% of schools nationally for attainment. (Table 1a & 1b pp 20-21)

The Gemini School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive with a rising roll of just under 1000 pupils. It is situated in a small town about three miles from The Aries School and attracts a significant number of pupils from that area. It is a specialist technology college and in 2002 gained the Schools' Achievement Award for improving GCSE Results. While attainment on entry is broadly average, the PANDA Report (2002) indicated attainment similar to schools nationally and in the top 25% based on prior attainment. (Table 1a & 1b pp. 20-21)

The Ofsted Report November 2003 (URN 115323) judged that The Gemini school was a good school. The strong leadership of the headteacher was said to have brought significant improvements and provided a sharp focus for raising achievement.

The head of The Gemini School was committed to collaborative working. He was a founder member of the School Improvement Collaborative (SIC) formed in 1998 which later became a NCSL 'Network Learning Community.' He was pleased to work with the LEA to support SCC, *'we have a corporate responsibility not to see*

schools go down the tubes.' The Aries School was already in Gemini's Specialist Outreach Plan but tensions existed as many pupils from the Aries area travelled out to attend the Gemini School. He believed the partnership was about improving Aries and not about the *'glory of the effective partner.'*

This case is significant as it involves the partnering of competing schools, one in 'special measures,' led by a headteacher new to headship, the other a successful school, led by a headteacher without first hand experience of 'special measures.'

Stage 1 Setting up the partnership. Preparing the ground and deciding what needs to be done. (summer 2002)

At an initial meeting with the Head of AIS and the Principal Advisor in spring 2002, both heads committed to working in partnership. The Aries head was particularly enthusiastic, *'I believe it is the right thing to do and it has come at the right time.'* He believed Gemini was a suitable partner as they had similar problems and was determined to join the SI Collaborative.

The Gemini head had concerns even at this early stage as after the initial meeting, *'it all became quiet and it wasn't clear what we were supposed to do.'* While there was initial agreement to form the partnership, there was no action, *'joint planning should have happened but the LEA left us unclear about how to proceed.'* He was aware of the sensitivities of a partnership, *'I try to see it from their point of view; to understand how it would be if someone suggested to me that I should work with a 'better' school to improve my school; it could be seen as an imposition.'*

In the absence of LEA guidance the Gemini head initiated an early *'ice breaking'* meeting to establish how the partnership could work, *'I wanted to made it clear from the start that I was not an expert, I wasn't coming to tell him how to run his school.'* Here he showed empathy with the Aries head, *'he took over in crises,*

thrown in at the deep end with weights tied to his feet and expected to swim! He has limited experience of other schools; I was struck by just how isolated he was.'

The Gemini head believed the partnership should provide particular support, *'an unfettered relationship, not one that is watching carefully, where you have to keep up the 'public face,' but one where you can talk openly about the pressures of special measures; not necessarily about advice or being told what to do.'*

Early discussions between the headteachers centred on practical issues about recruitment and retention, development of middle managers and the possible exchange of School Development Plans. With an Ofsted monitoring visit fast approaching, the Aries head wrote the partnership activities into the School Action Plan. The Gemini head's interest in Aries' strategies for improving attendance suggested the possibility of 'two way' learning.

The Gemini head saw his role as keeping an open dialogue, *'to nudge it along and allow them to set the pace.'* He was aware that Aries had much to do, *'at this stage we are essentially supportive; they are under sufficient pressure from Ofsted and the LEA; they will benefit more from partnership work once they are out of special measures.'* He believed the partnership should be about long term development rather than the immediacy of getting out of special measures, *'The Aries head has no background in school improvement; talking together has helped him decide what needs to be done.'*

The Aries head confirmed that partnerships need *'time to build trust and confidence.'* He stressed the importance of convincing others, *'you have to sell it to the staff and governors; otherwise, they will feel it is being done to them.'* The partnership was kept 'low key' as the schools were in competition for pupils and staff. An important test for the partnership was to see if they could work together despite

the tension of competition, *'you can forget the partnership of equals,'* said the Aries head, *'we are the ones in trouble! This is our 'hole' and we have to climb out of it!'* Furthermore the Aries head had not always found the LEA supportive, *'relations are often poor; they bring more pressure and we have enough of that from Ofsted; we need support!'*

Both heads agreed a major barrier for the development of the partnership was the lack of time. *'The partnership moves slowly'*, said the Aries head, *'there is no 'quick fix' for improving SCC even though Ofsted require measurable improvement short term.'* He stressed the need for sustained support, *'it may seem to be a simple solution to 'pair up' schools for immediate short term support, but it can only address the complexity of the situation over a longer term.'*

Stage 2 Developing the Partnership. Planting the seeds, watering and nurturing. (autumn 2002)

The autumn term visits revealed that most planned activities had been cancelled or poorly attended. The Aries head explained this was because of Ofsted monitoring. The Gemini head conceded that despite positive discussions and planning, *'nothing really happened during the summer and autumn terms.'* Following the Ofsted visit in November, it was judged that The Aries School no longer required special measures. The Gemini head hoped that stage was now set for more productive partnership work to take place, *'coming out of special measures may have uncorked the bottle.'*

Emerging from special measures had a big impact on The Aries School. The head appeared keen to move the partnership forward and reported that he had written partnership activities into the post Ofsted Action Plan and linked that to the School Improvement Plan. This plan reportedly included a professional development programme, AST support to improve teaching and learning, a joint Graduate Teachers

Scheme, support for the head of Science, Gifted and Talented, middle management training and joint training days. All of this the Aries head saw as, *'steady progress; not yet in a relationship, but courtship definitely taking place!'* The head of Gemini however was less convinced, *'arrangements are never specific and it is not certain if they will take place. Despite the proposed new plans in my view they lack commitment; if it doesn't work out, it doesn't seem to matter to them! I knew it would be slow, but it was never my job to go in and tell him what to do; partnerships rely heavily on interpersonal chemistry and are not easy to set up.'* He suggested that there were some people in both schools that did not believe in the benefits of partnership working, *'staff don't always see the bigger picture and the advantages of supporting another school.'* He further revealed that his governors had concerns, *'they are only interested in this school! They have reminded me that my job is to improve this school. There needs to be some money in it for them to be convinced that it is worthwhile for us.'*

Two contrasting pictures had emerged; the Aries head apparently positive, producing plans for partnership support and the Gemini head clearly frustrated that plans mostly fell through. The Gemini head was also critical of the LEA, *'brokering partnerships is like a dating agency, it may go wrong! The LEA didn't actually do anything to help build the relationship; they left it all up to me.'*

Stage 3 Incorporation 'harvesting the fruits' (spring 2003)

In spring 2003, the partnership entered a new phase as The Aries School received LIG funds to develop collaborative working with local schools and named Gemini as their partner. The Gemini head saw this as a financial opportunity to be grasped, *'we will charge for our time and any product they want to buy.'* He believed this would satisfy those who had questioned his support for The Aries School but saw this could affect

the relationship, *'I am not sure how they will feel about us charging for everything we do as they become a client rather than a partner.'* Indeed he was not confident the partnership would survive as the other LIG schools had questioned his school's involvement in the collaborative. His concerns were further heightened as his staff reported continued difficulties in making contact with their partners in The Aries School. Despite good intentions and many efforts to set up developmental work the response was again poor.

At this stage, the Aries head began to question the appropriateness of the partnership initiative, *'when in special measures, you need to be very single minded. I would have learned faster from a headteacher who has gone through special measures.'* He now revealed his visits to The Gemini School were of limited value, *'you can see what works there, but they don't have Ofsted monitoring every term!'* He felt that the link with The Gemini School could be more useful now they were out of special measures, *'they had no experience of special measures and weren't able to show us what to do.'*

The lack of clarity about the purpose and practice of partnership resulted in a miss-mash of expectations. The head of the Gemini School was careful not to act in a directive way, but to try to coach and help build capacity. Meanwhile the Aries head felt he needed more direction and became increasingly critical that he did not get it! The Gemini head however, seemed to blame The Aries School and the LEA, *'poor relationships and lack of capacity are the main issues and it was not my job to sort that out for them.'*

The impact in The Gemini School appeared more positive as attendance had improved since the introduction of strategies transferred from The Aries School, *'we learned a lot from them about improving attendance; their systems were more*

rigorous and effective.’ Here the ‘effective’ school demonstrated their capacity to observe and transfer good practice in the way that the SCC did not seem to be able to do.

The future development of this partnership was now within the LIG Collaborative Plan. Negotiations were difficult as the schools involved had been in competition for many years. The Gemini head observed with some amusement the *‘enforced collaboration of a group of headteachers, possibly the first time ever, sitting around the same table, talking about education and trying to work out how to address common issues.’*

Stage 4. ‘Looking back and planning forward. (summer term 2003)

During the summer term the first LIG Plan presented to the DfES was not accepted and required redrafting. One large collaborative seemed too unwieldy and the schools eventually decided to organise into three separate pairings. The head of the Gemini School was no longer involved in planning LIG collaboration but was named as a partner in The Aries School’s individual plan (Appendix 14 p.279).

The Gemini head believed that if nothing else, the partnership had achieved good working relationships between the schools, *‘we have established a rapport at headteacher level and departments are beginning to exchange ideas.’* In his view the biggest change for The Aries School came with the emergence from special measures but was candid about The Gemini School’s contribution, *‘they became more outward looking, more confident; not so challenged; but it’s hard to say how we contributed to their success.’*

The Aries head remained confident the partnership would continue, *‘it is formalised in the school plan and embedded in the LIG development plan.’* He maintained his belief that processes were in place for events to happen and benefit to follow. However throughout this partnership most energy has gone into planning but

little has apparently impacted on The Aries School.

Others involved in partnership working

The outcomes of the interviews with the heads were triangulated through the investigation of three activities in the partnership plan:

- Specialist School Outreach support for ICT and Science;
- Joint Graduate Training Scheme (GTS) and
- Middle managers training.

The assistant headteacher from The Gemini School was responsible for providing ICT and Science support. He believed in partnership work and saw it as, *'an honest attempt to see if schools can help each other and work in challenging situations.'*

Support initially involved the exchange of schemes of work and ICT staff from The Gemini School helped Aries staff get their computer network 'up and running.' The training programme had limited success however, *'their new teachers were keen but they all left at the end of the term! Other longer serving ICT teachers weren't interested and did not respond.'* Demonstration lessons on computer applications were similarly frustrated, *'there were several changes of teacher and there was no learning culture in the classrooms.'* There were also concerns about the partnership activities with the science department, *'there was always some reason for them not to get involved, meetings and training sessions were always being cancelled.'*

The assistant head from Gemini was critical of the way the support was organised, *'It wasn't worked out, it was more or less, team up and see what happens.'* He was disappointed in the lack of impact and benefit for his staff, *'it is supposed to be two way but nothing came from Aries; we were also conscious that we were neglecting our pupils.'* He felt that it was likely to take at least four years for collaborative work to begin to make an impact.

The Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) from Gemini ran the Graduate Teachers Scheme (GTS) and was responsible for tutoring the ICT graduate from Aries and the English Graduate from Gemini. Her experiences were more positive, *'this is good for the individual GTP students and the school; ICT expertise goes there, English practice comes back here; if it works in one school it will likely work in another nearby.'* The AST saw the benefits of joint working for herself, *'I am more aware of the differences between schools and have the time to see what is happening in different schools. It is good CPD and can raise the morale of those involved.'*

The planned programme for middle managers did not take place.

Summary

The head of The Aries School was determined to bring about improvement but morale overall remained low since the Ofsted Inspection had placed the school in special measures. Many staff members were as Ouston and Davies (1998) described, under pressure and generally negative about inspection; many were perceived to be resistant to change (Myers and Goldstein 1998; Stoll 1999). Partnership plans were drawn up but implementation was hampered by a continuing cycle of trained staff leaving and new staff needing trained; this frustrated the efforts and sapped the energy of the staff from The Gemini School.

The Aries head was optimistic and positive about improving his school and carried this enthusiasm into his talk about partnership; from the outset however he paid little more than lip service to the initiative. The Aries School was preoccupied with preparation for Ofsted visits each term and coping day to day as in Hargreaves' 'survivalist' culture (1995 p.28). While there were several attempts to establish the processes for collaborative support, without the structure that Handscomb (2004) and others considered necessary, productive collaboration was never established. Without

the capacity identified by Reynolds (1996) and Hopkins *et al.* (1994), The Aries School was not able to capitalise on the support offered and much planned activity fell through. Coming out of special measures did not create the conditions for the partnership to grow as the priorities for the Aries staff remained rooted in day to day management issues.

The partnership ground was not well prepared; from the outset the SLA was not involved. The clarity about what the partnership was supposed to do that Harris (2002) deemed necessary, was not present. The Gemini head tried to be a sensitive and caring partner; he had tried to prepare his staff to 'support' rather than 'pressure' those already under pressure but he became increasingly concerned about wasted efforts, the effect on his own school and the uneasiness of his Governing Body. The Gemini head was particularly critical of the LEA offices as they appeared to withdraw from the partnership once it had been brokered, leaving the schools to make the best of the situation. When The Aries School came out of special measures, he did not feel The Gemini School could claim any part in their success.

Relationships between the schools were cordial but Aries staff seemed unable to implement new ideas and Gemini teachers were increasingly frustrated by the lack of impact and the time spent out of their own school. A shared understanding of what needed to be done was not developed. Although a trusting relationship had begun to develop between the headteachers, the Aries head believed a more appropriate partnership would have been with a school in similar challenging circumstances that had successfully come through special measures as suggested by Crow (2005) and DfEE (2001)

There seemed to have been no transfer of policies or practices into The Aries School and revised action plans for partnership work remained at the level of

aspiration. As Hargreaves (1998) suggested, the effective school was better placed to incorporate good practice.

Despite coming out of special measures Aries remained in Myers' terms a 'swaying' school (1998 p.179); continued improvement was by no means certain, morale wavered between enthusiasm and dejection as the roll continued to fall and staff recruitment and retention issues remained unresolved.

Case Study 4 The Virgo-Leo partnership

Background to the partnership

The Virgo School is a small 11-16 mixed comprehensive with under 380 pupils. It is situated in a village in the North West of the County. Pupils were drawn from over 20 primary schools and a wide range of backgrounds including council and isolated rural housing. The percentage of FSM is below national average at 7% however the percentage of pupil with SEN (40%) is very high in comparison with schools nationally. The school includes a dyslexia unit. Attainment on entry is well below average. The PANDA Report for 2002 indicated that performance at KS3 and KS4 was well below average (Table 1a & 1b pp.20-21). The Ofsted Report for March 1997 (URN 115222) concluded that The Virgo School was well managed school, with many successful features.

The Leo School is a large, popular mixed comprehensive school with over 1800 pupils, approximately ten miles from The Virgo School. It serves a large market town and the surrounding villages. The school takes pupils from an area of relative social advantage. The attainment on entry covers the whole ability range. The PANDA Report for 2002 indicates that performance at KS3 and KS4 is well above average. The proportion of pupils with SEN is average for the county (Table 1a & 1b pp.20-21). The Leo School became a Technology College in 1994. The Ofsted Report

April 1997 (URN 115324) stated that The Leo School was a very good school that had improved significantly due to the strong and purposeful leadership of the headteacher and the governing body.

These two schools first worked together in 1996 when the Virgo head asked The Leo School for support. He wanted to change the public perception of the Virgo School, *'parents do not send their children here, they prefer the 11-18 schools nearby; our link with the FE College does not attract new parents.'* His belief was that parents would be more likely to send their children to The Virgo School if he could offer progression through to The Leo School 6th Form. The Governors of both schools agreed and a partnership was set up and written into The Virgo School's Prospectus 1996. The Leo head then attended new intake meetings at The Virgo School to cement the agreement and give reassurance to prospective parents about progression at 16+.

In 1999 this link developed further through the 'Virtual Education Action Zone.' This Action Zone linked Leo and four other 'successful' secondary schools, with feeder primary schools and schools causing concern, which included The Virgo School. LEA concern about The Virgo School continued to grow however as intake numbers did not increase, PANDA grades remained low and the school struggled to be financially viable.

In the summer term 2001, the then Director of Education arranged for the Leo head to be seconded to work in The Virgo School for one day a week. His brief was to support the head and prepare a strategy paper about the school's future. In the autumn term 2001, the report was presented to the LEA and the Virgo Governing Body. He suggested either a 'take over' whereby The Virgo School became an 11-16 annex of The Leo School or a stronger partnership to support improvement. Perhaps not

surprisingly, the Governors chose the later and with financial support from the LEA, drew up a two year contract to formalise the new partnership.

This partnership is significant as it was built on a history of collaboration between the two schools and a close relationship between the headteachers.

Stage 1 Setting up the partnership. Preparing the ground and deciding what needs to be done. (summer 2002)

By the summer term, the Virgo head had decided to retire. He had promoted the new partnership but his staff remained concerned about *'losing their identity.'* Suspicions about 'take over' had increased since the deputy from The Leo School had been appointed as the new head of The Virgo School. Some governors and teachers believed they would be *'swallowed up.'*

The Leo head was aware of these sensitivities but insisted, *'it is not 'Big Brother' taking over; we are both of equal significance; it is not us doing it to them.'* He believed that a 'two way' partnership was possible, *'things will go both ways, we both have strengths.'* He felt he had a good understanding of the issues and although optimistic about the partnership, he still believed that 'take over' was a better strategy to secure the long term future of The Virgo School. By the end of the term the Partnership Agreement was drawn up (Appendix 9 p.252). This clearly set out the rationale for the partnership and the basis for collaboration.

Stage 2 Development of the Partnership. Planting the seeds, watering and nurturing (autumn 2002).

By the beginning of the autumn term, the new head was in post. She felt enthusiastic about the partnership possibilities and believed she was well positioned to ensure early successes. She knew what her old school could offer but felt she must first learn about what The Virgo School needed before deciding on how to best use the support

available. A high level of trust already existed between the headteachers but trust still needed to be built between others, *'the governors here are threatened by the partnership, like the staff they want to be their own school with their own identity.'* The new head saw great potential in the partnership, *'this is a unique opportunity to create a collegiate of teachers for exchanging ideas, methods and practices.'* She was sensitive to the negative attitudes of the Virgo staff, *'they seem to think it's easy in The Leo School and they could do just as well if they had better pupils and resources!'* She believed that this was a distorted picture, *'they see Leo as very grand, very selective, pinching the best kids, but it isn't like that! They have had to work very hard to create their success.'*

The Virgo head could see that the systems, structures and the culture of high expectations present in The Leo School were not so evident in her new school. She understood that Virgo teachers needed to come to this realisation themselves, *'I could tell them what to do, I know what works, but it has to come from them.'* For the partnership to be effective, she believed, *'there must be belief that it can work; trust and confidence not just with the heads but across the staff.'* She stated that the staff and governors needed to know what the new partnership was trying to achieve, *'it has moved beyond improving the intake and is now about whole school improvement.'*

The Virgo head was pleased to have the head of The Leo School as her mentor but believed that mentoring for other staff would be too sensitive at that early stage. Although she had given reassurances about the partnership to her staff and governors, concern and uncertainty remained evident, *'staff feel it is imposed, there are concerns about 'two way' developments; losing time with classes due to visits and the big issue of losing our identity.'* While both heads believed learning could be 'two way,' most

benefit was likely to accrue to The Virgo School; as the Virgo head said, *'at this stage, we are really only paying lip service to the 'two way' idea.'*

Following joint SMT meetings, partnership activities moved on significantly (Appendix 10 p.259). A second visit to the Virgo head in the autumn term confirmed her delight with the partnership, *'it is really positive, staff members are accessing all sorts of things they couldn't experience elsewhere. They are really becoming part of it; finding out is much better than me telling!'*

A management committee for the partnership was set up, consisting of three senior managers and a governor from each school, the headteachers and the SLA. The Action Plan they drew up sets out activities, responsibilities and costs and how the partnership was to be monitored and evaluated (Appendix 11 p.263).

Several successful activities had taken place and these had helped to build trust, understanding and confidence. These were mainly professional development opportunities to share best practice and meetings to discuss issues and develop strategies. The Virgo head underlined the need to handle developments carefully, *'we have tried to be sensitive and non- threatening; where departments and individuals are positive they are encouraged to work collaboratively. Where there is reluctance on either party, the issue has not been forced.'*

The head of The Virgo School had already learned the importance of getting the right people involved, knowing the strengths of the partner school and having clear expectations about what activities were to achieve. She believed the management group was essential. She stressed the need to be flexible over arrangements with The Leo School, *'you cannot assume they can jump to give support when you suddenly need it! They still have their own difficulties, crises and agendas.'* She confirmed the need to focus on their own priorities and not just follow what Leo

offered, *'we are not joining them for the training day on condensing KS3 as we have no plans to do that.'*

The Leo head was also confident the partnership had made a good start, *'we need to feel our way forward, we need to be flexible; some of the aims are sensitive and cannot be written in the action plan, especially if they are about teacher competence.'* Not all collaboration had been positive, *'with the Humanities Project we ignored the chemistry of the people; it fell apart.'* Lessons were learned however, *'it is best to start with the people that are willing and able to develop the partnership. A plan that simply links 'needs and strategies,' can ignore context.'*

The Leo head felt progress with the partnership was accelerated by the new head's appointment, *'there would not have been the same openness and receptiveness with the previous head; he would have been defensive and not prepared to disrupt the equilibrium of his colleagues. The new head has convinced the governors and there was powerful opposition there.'* He also perceived conditions were right, *'it wouldn't work with a school close by; there would be too much tension over admissions and competition would spoil it.'*

Stage 3 Incorporation 'harvesting the fruits.' spring 2003

Partnership activities stalled in the spring term as both schools had Ofsted Inspections. The Leo head in particular revealed the effect, *'for weeks my head was full of nothing else; even though it is over, it is still on my mind.'*

The Ofsted Report (115222) stated that The Virgo School (115222) was *'providing an effective education for its pupils and has the capacity to improve even further.'* Furthermore, the report noted, *'work has developed with other schools, in particular through the partnership agreement with another local secondary school.'*

This is effective in securing improved continuity of experiences for pupils when they change school at ages 11 and 16' (p.4).

The Virgo head was pleased with the Ofsted judgements and keen to get *'back on track.'* She observed however that it was not always possible to discern what was learned through partnership, *'it is all tacit stuff, you can't identify tacit knowledge, but you pick it up by being there.'* This was important as many Virgo teachers had only ever worked in one school, *'they can go on courses but seeing it happen makes it real.'* In terms of 'transfer' however the Leo head was cautious, *'it is difficult to generalise, systems could move straight across, but it is better for people to come here and see them working; it's an 'iterative' approach.'*

The high profile association with The Leo School was also proving to be beneficial, *'Leo's excellent reputation in the eyes of parents is rubbing off on us. It is also an incentive to new staff.'* The Virgo head was determined to continue partnership activities using the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG). She confidently asserted *'it can't stop now.'*

The Leo head believed the LIG funding would improve the current working, *'the LEA will have little say in what we do! The client-consultant relationship is more clearly defined, provided they can pay, we can provide!'* He also identified the issue of being able to respond to all the 'clients' needs, *'our capacity to support varies as staff develop and move on. Governors are not interested in hearing how well the 'client' is doing, if we are struggling with our core business!'*

Others working in partnership

In the spring term other teachers were interviewed about partnership work:-

(1) The partnership manager in The Virgo School

At an earlier stage in the partnership development, the assistant head was made the partnership manager. He had been at The Virgo School for many years and believed staff and governors were becoming more positive about the partnership, *'in the beginning they didn't want the big school telling them what they were doing wrong, but it turned quickly when we met face to face; it has boosted morale and helped address curriculum weaknesses; for the first time we have pupils appealing to come here!'* He believed meeting other subject teachers was very important, *'in a small school the head of department is often the only teacher of that subject in the school.'* The main downside identified was the need to release staff from their existing teaching responsibilities, *'it is not always easy to cover lessons; our teachers don't like missing lessons, classes lose continuity and behaviour suffers.'*

(2) The Science teacher exchange

Two science teachers exchanged timetable for a week. Both teachers reported that they thoroughly enjoyed the experience and learned a great deal from it. Their learning and the impact on their teaching is summarised in Appendix 12 (p.269).

(3) The Transition project

The two teachers in charge of transition between Primary and Secondary had a series of meetings. The teacher from The Virgo School had used the partnership time to create a Transition Action Plan in collaboration with The Leo School (Appendix 13 p. 276).

Stage 4 'looking back, planning forward summer 2003

At the summer meeting the Virgo head was pleased to confirm the continuation of the partnership, *'the LIG funding is manna from heaven.'* The Leo head was also delighted to report, *'no quick fixes but steady progress; when we started they were on the SCC register, now there is a good Ofsted Report; their future is assured.'*

Others interviewed were similarly positive. The partnership managers saw partnership as an *'ongoing relationship; continuing to develop and grow. It has done more than the EAZ, and is less intense.'* They accepted that not everything had been successful but identified benefits for both schools, *'we have learned about procedures and practices at The Leo School and they have had to analyse and reflect on their own practice.'* They believed their own enthusiasm for the partnership, along with the support of the heads and the governors, would ensure continued success.

The head of science at The Virgo had changed his views completely, *'I was worried at first, but working with The Leo School has given us confidence and commitment to getting the work done.'*

Summary

Under the leadership of the new headteacher, The Virgo School may now be viewed in Myers' terms as a 'striving' school (1998 p.178) - determined to change and improve. The schools had a history of working together, so the choice of partner was appropriate and the partnership seen as a natural development. The headteachers developed the positive relationships that Leithwood (1995) saw as essential and this spread to others in both schools and encouraged them to engage in partnership work. Over time the concerns about 'take over' disappeared and confidence and trust grew between the schools. Acting as mentor and critical friend (MacBeath 1999 p.110), the Leo head had judged his support astutely and the Virgo head had maintained independence while developing interdependence with The Leo School along the continuum of development identified by Covey (1992 pp. 48-52). The management committee that Atkinson (2002) believed was essential for effective partnerships, was effective at keeping staff, governors and the LEA informed and on board. As identified by Duffy (1996) and Matthews and Sammons (2004), initiatives tend to

stall during Ofsted Inspection, however the schools recovered quickly as the structure and the processes to support collaboration as identified by Handscomb (2004) were already well developed and the initiative was seen to develop ‘inside out.’ Systems and practices transferred effectively and teachers in both schools felt the benefit of learning from each other as a shared understanding developed about what needed to be done to improve.

As the funding arrangements changed, the Virgo head became more specific about what she wanted although the Leo head became increasingly concerned that he might not always be able to maintain the quality of their support. The concern about losing teaching time through inter-school visits still remained. The partnership activities informed both schools’ plans for improvement and the foundations had been laid for a long and productive relationship. It was likely that the impact of the new knowledge and approaches would eventually be evidenced by improved student learning outcomes.

Case Study 5 The Libra-Taurus Partnership

Background to the Partnership

The Libra School is a mixed (11-19) comprehensive with over 1750 pupils situated in the east of the county. The school serves a community affected by severe deprivation and is part of an Educational Action Zone. The Libra School expanded rapidly in 1990s when large numbers of families were re-housed from London. The PANDA report 2002 shows attainment well below national averages compared with similar schools at KS3 and KS4. Value Added is in the lowest 25% in the County. There is a high percentage of FSM (23%) and 18% of pupils are on the SEN register (Table 1a & 1b pp.20-21). There are severe problems with recruitment and retention of staff. The Ofsted Report March 2000 (URN 115361) stated ‘*the headteacher provides good*

leadership, but too little is done to tackle poor behaviour and the effectiveness of teaching is severely affected by poor attitudes to learning by a minority of pupils.'

Ofsted judged the school to have serious weaknesses in pupils' behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching.

The Taurus School is a large mixed (11-19) comprehensive school with 1300 pupils about twelve miles from The Libra School. Taurus serves a large number of small rural communities and most pupils are transported to and from school. The socio-economic conditions are favourable and few pupils have statements of SEN. The PANDA report 2002 indicated achievement was broadly in line with national average but well below average when compared with similar schools based on FSM. County Value Added at KS3 is good and very good at KS4. At 91%, attendance at the school is better than the national average (Table 1a & 1b pp.20-21). The Ofsted Report (URN 115376) stated the headteacher was *'dynamic, experienced and confident that the school is good and getting better.'* He was supported by an *'excellent'* senior management team and there was *'firm commitment to school improvement.'*

The Libra-Taurus partnership is significant as the LEA sought to broker a relationship between two competing schools; where both heads were very experienced but had contrasting leadership styles and aspirations for what the partnership could achieve.

Stage 1 Setting up the partnership, building the relationship, preparing the ground and deciding what needs to be done.(summer 2002)

The Libra head was very positive about partnership; he was relieved and pleased to have the support of the LEA. HMI monitoring had identified progress made on some key issues but identified further weaknesses in boys' underachievement and literacy

across both key stages. An earlier LEA support plan had provided the headteacher with a mentor and strengthened the SMT by the addition of an advisory deputy head; this the Libra Head had found *'wholly positive,'* and so he readily accepted the proposed partnership with The Taurus School. Although the schools were in competition they were already linked through the local schools' Confederation and Taurus had helped when Libra had severe staff shortages during an Ofsted monitoring visit.

After a meeting with the LEA Officers, the Libra head believed the scene was set for positive partnership work to increase, *'the head of the Taurus School talked about what they could learn from us, he talked about partnership, not 'take over.'* Although the partnership may be seen as a *'natural development,'* the Libra head had some reservations about his actual partner head, *'his style is quite different from mine, he is very out spoken and is very anti-LEA.'* There were also practical concerns for the Libra head as his school was already in partnership with a nearby Beacon School, *'we are in their 'outreach' plan and we have worked together for some months; the head there has been very supportive to me.'* The Libra head had suggested working jointly with the two schools but the Taurus head rejected this insisting that activities with his school were kept completely separate.

The Taurus head believed he was the ideal partner for The Libra School, *'I have a background in collaborative work, I set up the Primary Cluster and the Schools' Confederation; I see my school as the flag ship but some of the others don't like that.'* He had already sought partnership work with the LEA, *'I offered to 'take over' a 'failing' primary school and I offered to set up the new secondary school, but they did not take me up on the offer.'* Although stating he wanted to work with the LEA on this initiative, he revealed that he did not believe the strategy would work,

'the partnership model will move too slowly to get schools out of trouble. Libra needs me to take over; we don't want a 'sink school' in the Confederation.'

The Libra head believed a good relationship between the two heads was crucial, *'it must be open and trusting; able to say what you think; debate must be robust and positive; a meeting of minds and a strong friendship.'* For the Libra head however, this relationship did not yet exist, *'there is no friendship; there may be a professional relationship but he will never be my mentor.'*

The Taurus head had no doubts about his suitability as a partner, *'we are well connected and our systems will transfer. We have generosity of spirit; we can put local politics aside and 'give and take.'* Furthermore he believed that he would be *'self-deprecating,'* in the relationship, *'I will say we can learn from them, we can always make it up. After all they're the ones in serious weaknesses.'* At the outset he made it clear he did not believe the Libra head could change the school, *'he isn't the right head for the job, a nice chap, but no charisma or drive! Put me in there and I will turn it round.'*

The Libra head also had growing uncertainty about the likely success of the partnership, *'they do things differently; I am not convinced that their staff would be successful here; just because systems work there does not mean they will transfer and work here.'* He also had reservations about his partner's approach, *'he tends to dominate; that style probably wouldn't work here. He thinks he understands us but he doesn't really appreciate the problems.'*

Despite these stated doubts, both heads and the LEA engaged in the partnership apparently unaware of the reservations. The Libra head believed he could not refuse, *'it is imposed really, but I want to see if it can work.'* The heads agreed to keep the partnership low key and each nominated a deputy to manage the partnership.

A list of support activities was drawn up by the partnership managers for the autumn term (Appendix 15 p. 284).

This partnership plan with the Taurus School was extensive but represented only part of the Libra's improvement strategy, *'we have an overall improvement plan and Taurus will support some of it.'* Libra was also working with other partners but the Taurus head believed his contribution would be outstanding, *'soon we will see high profile movement of expertise and practice between our two schools.'*

Stage 2 Developing the partnership. Planting the seeds, watering and nurturing. (autumn 2002)

In The Taurus School the head and the partnership manager were concerned that little has happened, *'we pushed it with them, but it is disappointing, nothing has come back to us.'* The high profile Taurus was looking for had not materialised, *'it has all gone a little quiet, we were ready to roll but the head has taken it from his deputy and handed it over to the new 'advisory' deputy to manage.'* The Taurus head was critical of this change, *'this is a bad decision, it was not discussed with us and it has upset progress; the (advisory) deputy was not properly briefed and she will only be there for a term.'* The partnership manager agreed the response had been lukewarm, *'our science AST has done some outreach, but there does not seem to be much of a desire to work together. We will persevere but if they don't get it going, we won't bother involving them in our training programme, it's up to them now!'*

At The Libra School, the Advisory deputy was trying hard to balance several partnership plans. This proved complicated as there were now separate plans for The Taurus Partnership, the Beacon Outreach plan, the EAZ Plan and the Ofsted Action Plan. All these plans involved collaboration between teachers, albeit with different departments and different schools.

The partnership manager from Taurus had not met with the new partnership manager from the Libra school to discuss the existing plan (Appendix 15 p.284). He felt it was like starting over again and was convinced the change in Libra management arrangements had caused progress to slow. At The Libra School there appeared little urgency or enthusiasm for the Taurus partnership. Apart from the AST Outreach work, no other activities had taken place. The Advisory deputy confirmed that Ofsted preparation was top of Libra School's agenda and Taurus was only one of the schools they were working with. In general visits to and from partner schools were resisted as they took teachers from their classes and that was seen to exacerbate cover and pupil behaviour problems. Libra staff generally seemed to resent the involvement of The Taurus School.

Stage 3 Incorporation 'Harvesting the fruits' spring 2003

By the end of the spring term partnership work had more or less ceased. The Taurus head blamed The Libra School, *'there has not been enough effort from them, so it has stalled.'* The Taurus head is particularly critical of the Libra head, *'it comes back to leadership, as far as I'm concerned, he's lost the plot! Everything there is knee jerk, crises management stuff.'* He was particularly disappointed that nothing has come back to reward them for their efforts, *'it all came from us and there was no kudos, little funding and nothing new there for us to learn!'*

The Taurus School had given Libra some practical support during the Ofsted visit to cover lessons and support the PE department, however Libra did not join in the Pastoral Support Programme or the 'transforming learning' project. The offer the Taurus head made for his staff to deliver the KS3 technology programme in the Libra School was also not taken up.

At The Libra School the Advisory deputy had completed her term and the deputy head had resumed her partnership responsibility. She seemed exasperated by the complexity of managing many the various support plans, *'I'm like an octopus trying to keep many plates spinning; we are inundated with offers from a multiplicity of partners.'* She explained how as the SCC in the area, The Libra School was named in nine Specialist School Outreach Plans; linked to EAZ activities, local Confederation inset and the LEA support programme for SCC. No wonder the deputy asserted, *'it's a challenge to track who's doing what, with who and why!'* Trying to engage in the Taurus programmes seemed to add to problems rather than support improvement, *'staff shortages have made it difficult to release staff to go anywhere, and when they are released it affects lessons and behaviour. Most teachers don't want to miss their classes; there is so much to pick up when they return.'*

Most partnership work did not take place or *'fizzled out'* after an initial meeting. The Libra deputy believed most plans perished due to poor understanding, *'we have a lot of fragile people here, it's not just about giving them pearls of wisdom, it's about valuing and learning; its always got to be about two way.'* By marked contrast however, the support from the Science AST from the Taurus School was successful, *'his work is outstanding; he formed good relationships in the department and really helped the science staff move forward.'*

The Beacon partnership seemed to have built on firmer foundations, *'there is trust with this partner, we understand the values that drive their desire to help; they always do what they say they will do.'* By implication this was missing from the Taurus partnership, *'apart from the work with science, trust is not there and their motives are not clear. I am sure the head is in it for some short term gain and not the*

longer haul. They 'tell us' rather than share and support; we have the impression that there is nothing for them to learn from us.'

The Libra School planned to continue in partnership with the Beacon School through LIG but not with The Taurus School. The Taurus head had also stopped attending meetings with the Confederation.

The final interview with the Taurus head confirmed that he believed that while they had helped improve The Libra School, there had been no benefit for them. From the outset he showed little faith that partnership would work. He still maintained a 'take over' was the answer, *'put me and my two deputies in there for two years; we would transform that school. They don't have the vision, his head is in the sand; they are blinkered; they need to be blitzed!'*

Stage 4 'looking back, planning forward' (summer 2003)

In the summer term the Taurus partnership manager's reflections about the partnership revealed that unlike his headteacher, he did not locate all the blame with The Libra School, *'they were willing to accept ideas but they had too much to deal with; at the same time we had our own issues.'* He appreciated that managing partnership activities was not easy, *'there was often confusion about what we were doing; we turned up one day and they were closed! Often their teachers weren't able to make it, people were off sick and they never told us!'* He believed that changing the partnership manager did not help, *'the job was passed around; she worked hard but she never got her head above water.'*

Several areas of successful partnership work were identified nonetheless:

- The work in science with the AST who, *'forced the issue, contacted the school and stuck to his arrangements.'* In science learning was also 'two way' as the AST became familiar with the GNVQ science programme and introduced it to

The Taurus School. Libra staff tutored the Taurus staff and provided them with the resources required.

- The teachers responsible for Primary Liaison in both schools met regularly to exchanged ideas and strategies. The Libra teacher in particular valued the support, *'he gave me lots of ideas, reassurance and encouragement. There was nothing in it for him, I knew very little and he knew a lot.'*

Apart from these two relationships, other partnership activities *'dropped away.'*

Summary

The Libra School seemed in Rosenholtz' terms 'stuck' in serious weaknesses (1989 p. 106). While there was a willingness to embrace change the school seemed to lack the capacity to make sustained progress (Stoll 1999). Staff felt under pressure and negative about Ofsted; when one key issue was addressed another was identified. As Ouston and Davies (1998) identified, staff felt they would never meet the Ofsted 'ideal'. The Libra head accepted the LEA offer of partnership with The Taurus School although he was uncertain that he could work with the Taurus head and he had already chosen to partner with a nearby Beacon school.

The Taurus head was keen to show that he could drive improvement in The Libra School. While he went along with the partnership he really believed The Libra School needed him to take it over. He did not believe the Libra head would ever improve the school. Although the ground for partnership seemed prepared and some previous collaboration had taken place, the dysfunctional clash of styles and cultures that this partnership presented was largely ignored. While there were processes identified by Handscomb (2004) were in place, the structure to support collaboration was not there at the outset nor did they build.

In the run up to the Ofsted monitoring visits The Libra School became preoccupied with inspection preparation; partnership activities were not seen as a priority and mainly failed to take place. In addition the change in partnership management at The Libra School caused a breakdown in communications and further delay. The Taurus head soon became frustrated by lack of progress; he blamed the Libra head in particular for failing to deliver and quickly lost interest when he could see no advantage for himself or his school. The partnering of these headteachers was inept from the outset and although the deputies worked better together, partnership activities had ceased by the third term and nothing further was planned.

As a school in challenging circumstances, The Libra School was inundated with offers of support but as Stoll (1999) identified, they did not have the capacity to manage them successfully. The Taurus School was pushy and directive and did not respond to Libra's needs. There was little evidence of transfer of processes or practices from the Libra head's preferred partner Beacon school, but the relationship was more cordial. Two successful pairings at middle management emerged between teachers as The Libra School and their counterparts at The Taurus School. This concurs with Haydn (2001) and demonstrates how in challenging situations, individuals can work together successfully and develop a shared understanding of need when relationships are trusting and collegiate. At this level new knowledge and skills may be more likely to impact on pupil learning outcomes.

Case study 6 The Pisces-Scorpio Partnership

Background to the partnership

The Pisces School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive with 750 pupils and a falling roll. The school is situated in a new town in the west of the County where the social and economic context is unfavourable. The proportion of pupils with SEN is well

above average at 36% and 22% of the pupils are entitled to FSM. The PANDA report for 2002 indicated that attainment at KS3 and KS4 was below that of similar schools and value added was poor (Table 1a & 1b pp. 20-21).

The Pisces School was placed on the SCC Register in 2001 following their Ofsted Inspection (URN 115217) when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. Although the report judged leadership and management to be good and well focused on raising standards in difficult circumstances, the school was described as *'fighting to provide a satisfactory education in the face of serious staffing difficulties.'*

The Scorpio School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school with over 1400 pupils, situated in a new town in the south of the county, 30 miles from Pisces. The roll has increased significantly over the past six years and the school is over subscribed. Although pupil attainment on entry is below average, with 18% of pupils having SEN and 15% eligible for FSM, the school has been identified as being successful in raising standards. Scorpio has been praised as one of the most improved schools in the County. The Ofsted Report, 2001 (UNR 115228) judged The Scorpio School as *'highly successful.'* The report praised the headteacher's *'powerful vision'* and *'conviction that all pupils have a right to the best education that the school can provide.'* The PANDA Report 2002 indicated that attainment was in line with national expectations and overall value added was satisfactory (Table 1a & 1b pp. 20-21).

The LEA had increasing concerns about The Pisces School for some time but not until 12 months after Ofsted judged the school to be in 'serious weaknesses' were discussions initiated about progress and the possibility of partnership with The Scorpio School. At this point the Pisces head was already forming a partnership with a Beacon Girls Grammar School in a neighbouring Authority. This partnership is

similar to the Libra-Taurus Partnership as the headteachers had contrasting styles and did not trust each other. In addition however, from the outset neither head was really interested in working in partnership.

Stage 1 Setting up the partnership. Preparing the ground and deciding what needs to be done. (summer and autumn 2002)

The partnership between the two schools did not get off to a good start. The Pisces head was not interested in a second partnership; she was pleased with the support that was building from the Beacon School which she believed had already '*improved staff morale.*' She was still shocked by the serious weaknesses judgement and believed confidence was badly damaged. '*Ofsted got it wrong,*' she maintained, '*we were just unlucky, we all have suffered.*' She believed the Inspectors prejudged the situation, '*they arrived with the view of the school as underachieving; nothing we could do could remove that.*' The headteacher felt '*jaded*' by the experience, neglected by the LEA and in need of sympathetic support.

The Head of The Pisces School was particularly concerned about the partnership with Scorpio, '*a headteacher in the same authority brings baggage that will get in the way.*' While she appreciated that The Scorpio School had improved, she felt she could not work with the Scorpio head, '*there is too much history between us; I am not confident in his integrity; this relationship will go nowhere.*' Although both of these headteachers were on the executive committee of the County Association of Secondary Heads (CASH), the relationship was not good. At a recent CASH Conference she overheard the Scorpio head talking to colleagues about another SCC, '*I didn't like what he said about the school and the headteacher. Would he talk about me like that? I don't trust him!*'

The Scorpio head was also cautious, *'Partnership may support a new head but I don't see it compensating for the inadequacy of an old one. She is a long standing headteacher; who am I to tell someone with her experience what to do? She says she wants help to recruit teachers; but I can't do that for her!'*

From the outset the partnership seemed doomed as neither headteacher believed they could work together or showed any interest in making the relationship work. These feelings were either not picked up or were ignored by the Astrologers; neither of the heads made their concerns explicit at the time.

The Scorpio head explained that his support seemed to be assumed by the LEA, *'I had a phone call from the Head of the Service and a one hour meeting with the head of Pisces and suddenly I was in a partnership with a school that wasn't really interested in my help!'* At the same time the Pisces head felt she couldn't refuse, *'I could see he didn't really want to help but I didn't feel I could say no!'*

The Pisces head believed the essential partnership qualities of trust and mutual benefit were not there. She believed the Beacon School offered what she needed, *'a low key two way partnership of equals to help build staff confidence and morale.'* As a school outside the County, the Beacon partnership carried no baggage, inferred no weakness and allowed the Pisces head to maintain professional pride.

The Scorpio head believed systems and structures could transfer when *'one school genuinely wants to help and the other school genuinely wants the help.'* However, in his view this partnership lacked commitment and as he pointed out, *'you can't transfer commitment!'* Fundamentally he did not believe the Pisces head could bring about improvement and he was not prepared to put time into a *'wasted effort.'* In his view The Pisces School needed a new headteacher, *'one with vision and energy.'*

At the end of the summer term no further discussions had taken place and nothing was planned. The Pisces head was critical of the LEA for not discussing support or the selection of suitable partner, *'we were in serious weaknesses for over a year before they talked to us about support and when they did it was all very much being done to; I still have no idea how The Scorpio School got involved.'* She believed the Beacon school partnership that she started should have been build upon. She believed the LEA did not appreciate the complexity of the situation.

The Scorpio head was also convinced that the LEA should have done more, *'it needed more discussion, clearer expectations and outcomes.'* He believed a deeper analysis of the situation should have taken place. He was sure partnerships could support improvement but it was not simply the case of asking for volunteers, *'partnerships need to be carefully arranged and strategies discussed; The Pisces School needs a new head! No amount of partnership work will achieve that!'*

Stage 2 Developing the partnership- 'planting the seeds, watering and nurturing.' (spring 2003)

It is perhaps not surprising that by the beginning of the spring term 2003, the partnership had made no progress. In an effort to show the LEA that partnership funds were being used, a telephone conversation between the two heads agree some support for an unqualified maths teacher in The Pisces School and a meeting of senior managers to discuss developments in the KS4 curriculum. The headteachers had talked once on the 'phone but they had not met or visited each other's schools. The Pisces head was convinced the partnership was a non starter, *'I am wasting my time. He shows no interest in what we may have to offer. He is too concerned about the time it will take for his staff to travel here!'*

The Pisces head felt unsupported by the LEA and on an *'emotional roller coaster ride!'* She believed more should have been done to support her after the Ofsted Inspection, *'there were times when I could have walked away, times when I felt like resigning. I am still not clear what to do.'* She seemed preoccupied with the serious weaknesses label and believed the main obstacle to improvement was recruitment and retention of staff. She felt locked in a downward spiral which was likely to place the school in special measures. She had been unable to share these concerns with the head of Scorpio School and at this stage, contact with the Beacon School had ceased as they were preoccupied their own Ofsted Inspection. She believed a different partner could have made the difference, *'the LEA brought us together but it was not a natural alliance. Another partner might have worked, perhaps with a local school or a head I know and trust; from the start this partnership was dead in the water.'*

Later in the spring term, the maths AST gave three days of support to the Pisces School and senior managers met once to discuss KS4. These were the only partnership activities that were recorded. The Pisces head claimed the Beacon partnership activities were *'brilliant by comparison.'* The only activity cited however was a music event for pupils at The Pisces School which provided *'a feel good factor, when everything else looked gloomy.'*

Stage 3 Looking back and planning forward (summer 2003)

In the final visit to the Pisces School the head reflected on the 'failed' partnership. She believed that the LEA got it wrong in the way the partnership was set up and her partner identifying, *'the formal ways of pairing the schools may not be right; the LEA cannot legislate for what will work especially when there is not the desire to make it work.'* She argued that simply pairing with a school that has improved in not

sufficient, *'school improvement is complex, pairing with another school that has been successful is not the answer.'* The Pisces head believed that she needed a sounding board, someone to trust and not someone who would simply say, *'we're good, look at us!'* She wanted someone to listen, to understand the situation, to help her feel better about herself and help find a way forward.

The Pisces School was now involved in the local LIG collaborative. Again the head was doubtful about the possible success of this collaborative venture, *'I don't know if it will work, there are some heads involved that I don't trust; they will be in it for themselves.'* By the end of term, no further Beacon activities had been arranged.

Meanwhile the head of the Scorpio School was involved in setting up a Network Learning Community with the head of another County school (his former deputy) and their feeder primary schools. He was also providing support for a neighbouring LIG school, *'they are on our door step; it is clear what they need and I know we can work together.'*

Summary

The situation in the Pisces School was complex. The head seemed determined to prove the Ofsted judgement wrong but as identified by Myers and Goldstein (1998) and Stoll and Fink (1996) the school appeared in a downward spiral fuelled by low morale, falling rolls and staff recruitment and retention difficulties. Neither the head's preferred partner nor the one chosen by the LEA were able to establish the processes and structures for effective collaboration. The Pisces head wanted a supportive partner to understand her situation and help restore her confidence a strategy suggested by Datnow (1999) and MacBeath (1999) but the Scorpio head did not want to be associated with what he felt was a hopeless situation.

The choice of Scorpio as a partner was inept. The LEA was unaware of the feelings the heads had for each other and the heads themselves were compliant. As a result, the partnership opportunity was wasted.

The Pisces head had a further opportunity to work collaboratively through the formation of the LIG. Here she readily identified how others were likely to jeopardise successful collaboration but did not see that her own reticence may be part of the problem. Meanwhile the Scorpio head sought to build partnerships with those he believed he could work with.

Chapter 5 Analysis of actions and developments and the emergence of cross case studies themes.

This chapter is divided into three parts. Part 1 provides an overview of the partnership strategy in response to the research questions and Part 2 drills further into the data to explore reasons why outcomes were as they were perceived to be. Part 3 builds models and typologies which provide insight into the development of partnership working in different contexts.

Part 1 Overview of the Partnership Strategy

The partnership strategy is in line with the current trends that seek to build a more collaborative agenda; it is grounded in the twin beliefs that partnership can hasten improvement in SCC (Bentley 2003) and DfES policy that suggests the LEA can play a valuable role in matching suitable partners and brokering effective partnerships (DfEE 2000 and 2001). Partnership working holds the possibility that learning may take place at school, department and classroom level and between institutions as identified by Ainscow *et al.* (1994), Fullan (1991), Sergiovanni (2000), Stoll (1999) and Haydn (2001).

In response to the overarching research question ‘how do partnerships between SCC and ‘effective’ schools evolve and either support (or hinder) improvement?’ the findings reported here concur with those in the DfEE Report (2001) as outcomes from this partnership initiative were indeed variable. As Wood and Cribb (2001) assert it is not easy to disentangle what partnerships actually achieved. Indeed the research concurs with Timberley and Robinson (2003) as what they failed to do is more readily identifiable. Improvement is largely seen in the gradual building of a supportive partnership culture which at best is receptive to dialogue, sharing practice and some collaboration between key groups and individual teachers. While the building of

collaborative capacity as Bentley (2003) suggests is a necessary first step it is not sufficient to ensure improvement. Bollen (1989) argues that school improvement is a process and given the relatively short time frame of this initiative the absence of institutional change and embedded practice is not surprising.

The study highlights how SCC are subject to many offers of support as well as significant pressure. This may indeed hinder improvement as the judicious mix of pressure and support that Barber (1998) refers to was not easily achieved by SCC as several appeared overwhelmed by both the pressure and the support.

It follows therefore that the transfer of systems and practices was similarly variable. The study supports the findings of Anderson (1998) and Dutnow (1999) that self-identified strategies between partners fit rather than challenge current practice. Partnership activities were predictable and bolted onto existing plans; they mainly involved support for individuals and weak departments and the exchange of schemes of work (Appendices 5-15 pp. 238-284). These activities which require teachers to learn new strategies and structures within a relatively short period of time are criticised by Myers and Goldstein (1998 p.177) as they are likely to reinforce the failing school label. In the study, partnership activities often had a negative impact on the morale and self-esteem of heads and teachers as they supported the view that it was their weaknesses that needed to be addressed. The research qualifies the belief expressed by Fullan (2001) that schools are 'terrible at learning from each other' (p.92), as the findings suggest that effective schools in the partnership were more likely to learn from their partner, make time to reflect on practice and improve their own systems. By comparison most of the SCC in the study seemed unable to make time to reflect and improve their systems as partnership work was not seen as a priority and they were beset with day to day issues and Ofsted preparations. In

particular they had difficulty releasing staff to engage in partnership work. Apart from a few individual cases, the overall impact of the transfer of systems and practices in the majority of partnerships was limited.

The research also asked how effective the LEA was at matching and brokering the partnerships. The LEA was involved in brokering all the partnerships; three were called 'natural' as they built upon existing collaborative relationships, the other three were 'arranged' (Table 4 p.86). The research shows that natural partnerships were no more or less successful than those arranged by the LEA. Although The Libra School had previous connections with The Taurus School through the School's Confederation and the head of the Sagittarius School was acting head at The Capricorn School for a term, neither of the SCC consider them suitable partners. All the partnerships were introduced 'top down' and none of the heads of the SCC felt they could refuse to join in. Only the Virgo-Leo partnership showed signs of becoming an 'inside out' collaborative improvement programme and only the Virgo head appeared to form a special professional relationship with her partner and embrace the notion of being mentored. None of the effective partners claimed that they had contributed directly to 'capacity building and change' as described in the role of the external agent in Harris (2002 p.57). With the exception of the Virgo-Leo partnership, others appeared to lack purpose and clarity and a shared understanding of intended outcomes.

The research supports the findings of Lownsbrough and Huber (2003) as lack of clarity about expectations, the tendency of one partner to dominate and insecurity about the longevity of the initiative resulted in most partnerships lacking commitment and petering out when the funding stopped. Uncertainty about the continuation of the initiative beyond the first year compounded the situation and inhibited commitment and as Ghouri (1999) also found, schools were reluctant to invest in short term

relationships and amongst the effective partners it was found there were concerns about the potential for adverse effects on their own schools. There was no exit strategy to support sustainability apart from an aspiration that some partnerships may continue through LIG Collaboratives. As Harris (op cit) reminds us, without commitment and an adequate time-scale,

change will be superficial and unsustainable (p. 113)

Many of the SCC in the study were visited by Ofsted during the research period; some had inspections and some were placed in an Ofsted category, others were subject to monitoring visits. The research sought to find out if the period following a damaging Ofsted was the appropriate time to form a new partnership and if partnership could continue during inspection and post-inspection. The negative impact of Ofsted on partnership work was clearly evidenced in three of the case studies and supports the findings of Matthews and Sammons (2004), Gray, (2000), Turner, (1998) and Pugh (1998). It was also evident that partnership activities cease in the 'run up,' during and post-Inspection. The approaching Ofsted Inspection made the effective school heads think again about the time out of school for themselves and their staff. The inability of SCC to manage the partnership support was also evident and indeed questions the appropriateness of the partnership strategy for schools in these Ofsted categories. In particular, partner schools in special measures were preoccupied with the Ofsted visit each term; this dominated the improvement agenda and marginalised engagement in partnership activities. It remains to be seen if future partnership work will be challenged by the unpredictability of the new 'short notice' inspections (DfES 2005) and the emphasis on self-evaluation or whether short notice will indeed reduce the potential for a major run up and diversion of attention.

The research also asked if teachers from ostensibly different schools develop a shared understanding of what needs to be done to improve partner schools. The basic model of support for teachers in the partnerships involved exchange visits. While teachers from the effective schools had concerns about missing their classes, the SCC had additional issues around cover for releasing teachers to visit partner schools and were plagued by the difficulties of recruitment and retention of key staff. The concerns expressed by Barth (1990) over the choice of effective schools as partners are endorsed by this research as they tended to reinforce the perceived helplessness of the SCC and create a 'deficit' rather than 'collegiate' model. Furthermore my research shows that staff in effective schools, in particular their headteachers, viewed the partnership as essentially an opportunity for their own aggrandisement and/or professional development. SCC however, wanted practical help to resolve key problems and issues often relating to staffing. The majority of partner schools were unable or unwilling to second staff to work in partner schools and SCC were not always appreciative or able to use the support that was offered.

Part 2 Why things were perceived to happen as they did.

To better understand why the partnership strategy failed to have the intended impact on the majority of SCC, I here drill down through the research evidence and the research questions that relate to LEAs ability to match schools and broker partnerships that support improvement in SCC. In particular I focus on:

- the assumptions that the LEA Officers made,
- the inconsistencies and lack of clarity,
- monitoring, evaluating and holding to account,
- leadership and partnership.

(i) Assumptions and outcomes

In Chapter 4 Part 1, Table 5a (p.89) the assumptions on which the LEA officers based the partnership strategy are listed. In Table 6 below, these assumptions are now juxtaposed with the outcomes from the case studies and referenced to the literature.

Assumptions and outcomes

Assumptions	Outcomes
Systems, practices and policies can be transferred from effective schools to SCC.	The transfer of policies and practices was variable; effective schools were more likely to transfer practices in. As Lodge (1998) also observed, the SCC were 'lumped' SCC together as one type, ignoring what Myers and Goldstein (1998) identified as the uniqueness of each troubled school. As asserted by Anderson (1998) and Datnow (1999), self-identified strategies between partners were found to support rather than challenge existing practice.
The LEA can identify suitable partners, broker effective partnerships and hold them to account.	Overall the LEA did not meet the standard outlined by Woods and Cribb, (2001) and Ofsted & Audit Report (2001) as they overall failed to broker effective partnerships, monitor developments and hold to account.
Effective schools (in particular ex-Grant Maintained schools), with high profile headteachers make suitable partners for SCC; they have systems and models that work and these can be driven through SCC.	The research concurs with Harris and Bennett (2001) as successful partnerships were dependent upon the relationship that built between the schools and the tone and tenor for this was set by the headteachers. The ability to build rapport, act as mentor, coach or critical friend as identified by MacBeath (1999) were not evident in effective schools per se and no training was made available or thought necessary. Effective schools did not necessarily make suitable partners for SCC. Indeed some partner heads were convinced that the best strategy to improve SCC was 'takeover.'
Effective schools have time, expertise and capacity to engage productively to support improvement in SCC.	In line with Ghouri (1999) this research shows that partners became frustrated when time seems wasted and teachers miss lessons and effective schools couldn't match the expectations of the SCC. Lack of impact overall suggests that effective schools did not necessarily know how to stimulate improvement in SCC, nor were they able to persuade SCC to adopt practices they believed would be beneficial; findings also drawn by Manthei (1992) and Fullan (1992).

Assumptions (continued)	Outcomes (continued)
SCC will want to work with effective schools.	The initiative was top down and SCC felt they 'had to' accept but they did not all want to. Not all SCC believed effective schools have the expertise they needed or saw the strategy as a priority. As Zey (1984) suggests, schools preferred to select their partners although this research reveals that self selected partners were no more successful at supporting their improvement.
Over time some of the major issues in SCC are amenable to solution through collaborative activities.	In common with other research i.e. Mortimore and Whitty (1997), Gray (2000) and Ofsted (1999a) a key issue for SCC in this study was the recruitment and retention of teachers. Partnerships in this study were not able to improve matters for their SCC partners. A few departments found sharing resources and strategies productive but SCC did not always have the capacity to make use of all the support offered. In line with Patterson and West-Burnham (2005), evidence that leadership is strengthened by partnership is scant.

Table 6

The assumptions about the strategy contrast sharply with the outcomes identified in this research. The analysis reveals a high degree of misplaced confidence in the strategy on the part of the Astrologers along with their lack of knowledge, understanding and application of relevant SESI research findings highlighted in Table 6. In addition to these assumptions, inconsistencies also emerged between the expectations held by the Head of AIS and those of the Principal Adviser and it is to these that I now turn.

(ii) Inconsistencies and lack of clarity

As co-authors of the strategy, the Astrologers did not have a shared understanding about some specific aspects of partnership working, an essential ingredient identified by Southworth (1995) for effective partnership between headteachers and their deputies. This left the strategy open to different interpretations and as a result, inconsistencies and lack of clarity arose, as identified in Chapter 4, Part 1 Table 5b (p.

89). This illustrates how views of partnership working have a particularly individual perspective; as Bowe *et al.* (1994) point out- occupying the same landscape yet seeing it differently, depending on where you stand.

Inconsistencies and lack of clarity.

Inconsistencies and questions	Outcomes
Is the partnership strategy a 'robust intervention' or a 'voluntary activity?'	The outcomes and behaviours confirm this was not a robust intervention. Although schools appeared to engage 'voluntarily' as none declined, most felt they could not say no. The study reveals how SCC 'push back' when partners tried to dominate and as a result those partnerships did not develop. Similarly, effective partners withdrew from the partnership when they don't get what they wanted or did not believe the partnership would succeed.
Is the strategy 'high profile' or 'low key?'	The Head of AIS and some effective partner heads wanted the strategy to be 'high profile,' but as Winitzky <i>et al.</i> (1992) also found, most SCC wanted it kept low key. The SCC in the study were concerned that the Ofsted 'failing school' label identified by Myers and Goldstein (1998) would be added to by the LEA 'partnership' label and as such would further disable rather than enable.
Are the partners 'driving improvement through' or supporting improvement of SCC? Is partnership about pressure or support?	The research concurs with Fullan (1992) and Manthei (1992) as partners who tried to 'drive improvement,' found their efforts frustrated. As MacBeath (1998) and Weindling (2004) also found, more effective partners nudged the partnership along and helped deal with problems as they arose. As with Crow (2005), partnerships grounded in support, sought to relieve pressure rather than add to it. In all cases effective partners believed the SCC were already pressured by Ofsted and/or the LEA.

Inconsistencies and questions(continued)	Outcomes (continued)
Do headteachers in the partnerships necessarily need to like or hold each other in high professional regard?	As also found by Walker <i>et al.</i> (1998), Southworth (2005) and Crow (2005) successful partnerships were dependent upon the relationship that built between the schools and the tone and tenor for this was set by the headteachers. As Hobson <i>et al.</i> (2003) and Earley <i>et al.</i> (2002) also found, it was essential that they liked each other and held each other in high professional regard.
To what extent are partnerships ‘two way?’	The partnerships were brokered on the principle of ‘two way’ and some partners genuinely sought to make it so. Other partners and indeed the LEA officers paid ‘lip service’ to the principle. The partnerships that continued through LIG believed the clarity of ‘one way’ was beneficial and sharpened the partners support in a client-consultant model.

Table 7

These inconsistencies and unresolved issues caused confusion for schools and advisers from the outset and plagued development throughout the life of the strategy. How this contributed to the formation of models and typologies will be explored in Chapter 6.

(iii) Monitoring, evaluating and holding to account.

The partnership strategy claimed to place SLAs in the key role of monitoring, evaluating, holding to account and as possible agents of change. At the outset however SLAs were unclear about the strategy; most were not involved in selection and brokering and uncertain about what the partnerships intended to do. Covey (1992 p.29) asserts that ‘without involvement there is no commitment’ and from the outset most SLAs were neither involved nor committed and indeed some were sceptical about the likely success of the strategy. This corresponds with the conclusions of Winitzki *et al.* (1992) who highlight the risk of insufficient involvement in planning

in school-university partnerships and Southworth (1995) who suggested partnership require greater transparency and shared philosophy. The strategy was in part informed by the Head of the Advisory Service's belief that '*Advisers are too laid back, good at support but not intervention*' and '*expertise is in the schools.*' Little was done however to develop trust and shared understanding with the SLAs, essential ingredients for advisers to foster change identified by Walker *et al.* (1998) and Bryk and Schneider (2002). By their actions the Astrologers appeared to undervalue the role of the SLA as change agent; a potentially crucial role highlighted by Gray (2000) and Harris (2002). In essence they failed to model the very practices that they hoped the partnerships would engender in schools. SLAs were unclear about their role and in particular questioned how to evaluate and hold to account without clarity about what should be happening and which part of any activity was attributable to the LEA partnership initiative. For example, it was not clear if AST support from a partner school was 'outreach' or a partnership activity! As with McCarthy (2002) evaluation was limited to a subjective assessment of participants' satisfaction with the partnership and their views of the possible impact on their school, rather than actual data and evidence of improvement in pupil outcomes. Without the existence of clear aims and targets, as Harris (2002) affirms:

gauging the impact of change is difficult (p.45).

A further consequence of the lack of clarity virtually ensured that SLAs were not involved in developing Partnerships plans. Although most plans contained systems for monitoring and evaluating, their use and impact proved to be variable in implementation:-

- The Virgo-Leo partnership drew up a contract, had a steering group which included the SLA and incorporated ways of monitoring and evaluating itself.

- The Cancer-Aquarius partnership used the existing LEA Cross Service Meeting to report back and monitor partnership progress.
- The Sagittarius School evaluated its own activities with The Capricorn School but had no system for feedback or accountability.
- Other partnerships did not set systems up for monitoring or evaluating.

In the main the headteachers in SCC were, as Patterson and West-Burnham (2005) also noted, too preoccupied with day to day issues and Ofsted preparation to have time to evaluate the impact of partnership activity. The variety of approaches employed by the headteachers supports Southworth's (2005) view that what leaders do is contingent upon the circumstances they find themselves in. For most headteachers and SLAs, the partnerships become increasingly peripheral to their urgent and important work. With the exception of the Virgo-Leo partnership, SLAs failed to keep track of the partnership activities and did not see this as important to their role. This concurs with the OECD (2001) study of innovation initiatives which concludes that,

changes designed with little involvement of those destined to use them are rarely effective (p.88)

(iv) Leadership and Partnership

This study endorses the view that the actions of leaders are central to securing and sustaining improvement or indeed accounting for the lack of it (Gray and Wilcox 1995; Stoll and Fink 1996; Teddlie and Stringfield 1993; Sammons *et al.* 1997; Stoll and Myers 1998; Harris and Bennett 2001; Haydn 2001). There was no evidence in these particular cases of SCC being 'turned around' in any dramatic fashion by the arrival of a new headteacher, although some incremental change and capacity building was seen. Leadership effects are difficult to detect as they are mostly indirect, but as Leithwood *et al* (2004) point out they can be seen in leadership practices that change

conditions and build capacity. Capacity building was particularly marked in The Virgo School, where the partner believed the 'right' headteacher appointment had been made. Such confidence in the leadership of the headteacher appeared not to be shared by the partner heads involved with the Capricorn, Libra and Pisces schools. The actions of the headteachers in the study again reinforce Southworth (op cit) as 'contingency theory' supports the view that what leaders do is largely dependent upon the particular circumstances they find themselves in. In the majority of SCC in this study, the headteachers did not believe working with an 'effective' partner was necessarily a priority at that time. In common with other SCC, improvement was frustrated by the loss of effective staff, slowness in embracing new ideas and difficulties in recruiting suitable experienced teachers, factors also identified by Ofsted (2004a p.65). Each SCC in the study has a unique combination of difficulties and as Crow (2005) also observes, partner headteachers (not from such challenging schools) had a 'limited perspective' on what needed to be done. This notion of 'limited perspective' resonates throughout the majority of partnerships at senior and middle management. Similarly, the notion of Distributed leadership (Southworth ibid p.161) was utilised in a 'contingent manner' (p.159); in the Virgo-Leo, Cancer-Aquarius and Libra-Taurus partnerships, management of the partnership was devolved to other leaders; in the Aries-Gemini and Pisces-Scorpio it was not developed and in the Capricorn-Sagittarius partnership 'distribution' was used by the head of Capricorn to distance himself from his partner head. The challenges faced by those new to the headship in a SCC were identified and align with the findings of Patterson and West-Burnham (2005), Bright and Ware (2003) and Hobson, Brown *et al* (2003). Elements of a process based approach to promoting leadership learning identified by Bush, Briggs *et al* (2003) was evident in the Virgo-Leo partnership and

was embryonic in the Cancer-Aquarius partnership. In Virgo-Leo there seemed to be a positive mentoring relationship. Here the Virgo head knew and trusted the Leo head and welcomed his advice; findings paralleled in research by Leithwood (1995), Hobson *et al* (2003) and Earley *et al.* (2002) and in the relationship described by MacBeath (1999) as a 'critical friendship' (p.110). New knowledge and skills were impacting within the Virgo-Leo partnership but at best there was some participant learning within the other partnerships. Although Mitchell *et al.* (2000) suggest change can be lead by effective partner acting as external 'change agent,' this was not found in the case studies that are the focus of this research. Some helpful relationships developed at headteacher, deputy head and department level but this is the most positive interpretation of their impacts. In all cases partnerships floundered where the partner had fixed ideas about what an effective leader should do and ignored the uniqueness of the SCC. The majority of heads were unclear about their partner role and the partnership remit, and paid lip service to the notion of 'two way' learning.

Part 3. Models and typologies

The synthesis of the research analysis of the key questions with the main themes in the literature leads to the development of several models and typologies which are presented in the section. Each model selects and combines specific elements of partnership functioning and aims to provide a lens through which the partnerships can be viewed more clearly. The models can also be overlaid to provide further insight into partnership working and how it can be more effectively achieved.

Sections 1&2 construct models that focus on the capacity of the SCC to engage and benefit from partnership. Sections 3&4 build models around the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of the headteachers joined in partnership by the LEA. Section 5 provides a typology of partnerships.

Section 1. The ‘dependence – independence - interdependence’ model.

This model (adapted from Covey 2002) illustrates how organisations develop the potential for partnership working and the limitations of such working until they have the capacity to work independently (Table 8 p.170).

Section 2. The ‘structures and processes’ matrix.

This model (adapted from Handscomb, 2004) locates the schools in terms of the rationale they hold for partnership working (structure) and what actually happens when they work together (processes) (Table 9 p.173).

Section 3. The ‘experience of partnership and openness to partnership’ matrix.

This model is used to locate, compare and contrast the attitudes held by the ‘effective’ headteachers and the heads of the SCC in the study. It can be used to predict the potential for partnership development between individuals and organisations (Table 10 p.176).

Section 4. The ‘situational partnership’ model.

This model underlines the importance leadership plays in building the school’s capacity to benefit from partnership and collaboration. It is build around the headteachers’ attitudes towards partnership (Table 11 p.178) and their beliefs about the appropriateness of working with their allocated partner (Table 12 p.181).

Section 5. The Partnership typology.

This seeks to combine the characteristics of various partnerships and is built around the research evidence from this study on effective and antithetical factors in the tradition of Sammons *et al.* 1995; Reynolds 1996; Myers 1996 and others in the SESI field (Table 13 p.182-3)

Section 1. The Dependence - independence - interdependence model.

This research concurs with Bentley (2003) that collaboration is dependent upon building of capacity both between schools and within schools. The findings illustrate the unique position of each school; a position identified by Stoll (1998) as relevant to improvement processes and shows how both the SCC and the effective schools are at different stages in terms of internal and external capacity to work in partnership, although the strategy itself lumps them together as if they were all at the same point. Covey (1992 p.48) usefully describes a continuum along which organisations, departments and individuals may move from dependence to independence to interdependence. This model is adapted here to map growth in organisational effectiveness and fits well with Stoll's three key influences (1999 p.506). By definition, a school classified as 'Causing Concern' has limited internal capacity to improve as revealed in studies by Hopkins *et al.* (1991), Barber (1998), Reynolds (1998), Myers and Goldstein (1998) and as Matthews and Sammons (2004) concluded, is likely to be dependent on others for direction, support and guidance. The research identifies SCC at this dependent stage and not yet accepting the need for improvement, a point regarded by Gray (2000) as a critical first step in engendering improvement. Over time, as Louis and Miles (1998) suggest, schools can develop improvement cultures, become independent, able to take care of themselves, inner-directed and self-reliant. Haydn (2001) also illustrates how an effective department can exist 'independently' within the overall situation of a 'failing' school and reveals how appropriate leadership can release the internal capacity of the effective department to support and model improvement across the school. This research supports Gray (2000) when he points out that different schools, in different contexts require different amounts of time to improve, particularly those in the most

challenging areas; a position also supported by Mortimore and Whitty (1997) and Ofsted (1999a). Schools may continue beyond independence, increasingly aware of the potential of interdependence. At this stage they develop structures and processes which support effective collaboration according to Handscomb (2004). This strongly supports the view that effective partnership and collaboration are indeed characterised by the development of interdependence.

The current focus on collaboration, networking and partnership follows on from years of Government strategies which encouraged schools to develop independence, free from the control of the Local Authority and free to compete in the market place for pupils and resources. At this time, the shift in National Strategy in itself seems at odds given the continued focus on individual school performance through league tables and Ofsted Inspection. Furthermore the partnership and collaborative agenda is not matched with the necessary change in culture at a school level as identified by Schein (1985). Schools continue to define themselves consciously or unconsciously, in terms of their individual performance, in comparison with and in competition with other schools.

Based on my research I have constructed a continuum from dependent to interdependent and placed the schools in the study at different points along the continuum Table 8 (p.170). Effective schools are found on the continuum from independent to interdependent; SCC are found along the continuum from dependent to independent. The situation is further complicated as within the schools, individuals and departments can also be located along the continuum from dependent to interdependent. This is underlined by Myers and Goldstein (1998) as they suggested that most schools were likely to be 'failing' some of their pupils and Stoll and Fink (1996) when they highlight 'differential effectiveness' (p.35). In this study also

schools in the failing category have some effective individuals and effective departments. Furthermore Sammons *et al.* (1997) showed that schools are unlikely to be equally successful across subject departments and Haydn (2001) described the spectacular performance of one department within a ‘failing’ school, that later improved all departments using the strategies adopted by the successful department.

Dependence-independence-interdependence

Dependent	Independent	Interdependent
Those who lean towards dependence tend to blame others for their situation. They readily accept offers of help and want others to do things for them. They are poor at day to day management and tend to be reactive in their approach. They are not yet able to benefit from the support of partner schools or indeed see it as support.	Independence is characterised by confidence and self-reliance. Independent schools are able to choose and get what is needed by their efforts. They are collegiate and can make it on their own; a major achievement in itself. Many schools remain at this effective stage.	Interdependence is characterised by cooperation, combining expertise and improving together. Schools are first independent but realise they can achieve more through interdependence. They approach such innovation with enthusiasm and energy.

Table 8

Within this model, as SCC improve and move towards independence they increasingly demonstrate the key characteristics of effectiveness as identified by Sammons *et al* (1995) and are able to apply strategies that fit their particular needs (Harris 2002). For those schools in Ofsted categories, regular monitoring and Inspection charts their improvement with reference to the criteria in the Ofsted Handbook for inspecting secondary schools (Ofsted 2003b). Once the school is deemed to have the capacity to function independently, it is then believed to have the potential to work interdependently. Dependent schools by contrast struggle to work interdependently; they lack the capacity to do so as they must first achieve independence as a prerequisite for working interdependently. By definition therefore, SCC lack the capacity to work interdependently as they have not reached

independence although some effective individuals and independent departments may work successfully in partnership. Similarly effective partners have the capacity to work independently and the potential to work interdependently with those also able to work independently. Within the model, effective partnership is characterised by two independent schools with the culture, structures and processes to work effectively together. Effective partnership between independent and dependent schools if not impossible, is unlikely to flourish until the dependent school has moved closer to independence and developed the necessary structures and processes.

The LEA partnership strategy, grounded in the notion of collaboration and cooperation, sets an agenda that most pairings were unable to meet. While partners may know how they would like to be, they do not have the capacity to be so and the LEA leaves them without preparation, training or effective support. Effective partnership is seen to build as The Virgo School becomes increasingly independent and seeks to work interdependently with The Leo School. The other SCC are largely at the 'dependent' stage and additionally, some have no desire to work interdependently with their LEA identified partner school.

Appreciation of this model helps clarify where the SCC are and what support is appropriate to their needs and could help avoid time being wasted on activities that may hinder rather than promote improvement. The model helps clarify the brief for effective partners and questions the inclusion of robustly independent partner schools that are motivated by 'take over' rather than partnership. Furthermore it helps define a role for the SLA as the LEA representative best able to gauge how, when and who are likely to be able to engage in partnership activities and identify the partner they are most likely to build a partnership with. This also involves some understanding of

school's openness and experience of change and the structures and processes that support partnership and collaboration. It is to these dimensions that I now turn.

Section 2 The structure and process model.

The development of effective partnership is dependent upon school cultures that have or are able to build both structures and processes which support collaboration (Schein 1985; Hargreaves 1995; Reynolds 1996; Handscomb 2004). Within this model, the structure provides the rationale for partnership between SCC and effective schools and the processes describe what actually happens when they work together. The development of the partnership over time is dependent upon the desire and ability of the partners to create processes that are built around clear established structures (Table 9 p.173).

1. The Virgo/Leo partnership was established with clear structures and processes. The headteachers trusted each other and believed the partnership would support improvement. There were a series of planned activities that took place and were evaluated. Collegiate relationships built up between the schools.
2. The Aries/Gemini partnership had initial enthusiasm that was not maintained. The headteachers met and discussed procedures and revised plans to restart the initiative. Relations were cordial and there was occasional sporadic activity, but processes were never sufficiently established to ensure collaborative working.
3. The Pisces/Scorpio partnership lacked commitment from the outset and working together remained a low priority. There was some brief engagement to justify funding but there was no sustained effort. The partnership never established the rationale for working together and failed to develop the processes that support effective working.
4. The Libra/Taurus, Capricorn/Sagittarius and Cancer/Aquarius partnerships had some tradition of partnership work. Trust was based on key individuals and was not

sustained after they left. There was some short term activity but overall the partnerships lacked rigour, direction and follow through and failed to align or agree on the rationale for working together.

P R O C E S S	HIGH	
	Tradition of partnership work Trust based on key individuals Some short term activity Momentum goes when key people leave Lacks rigour, direction and follow through Libra/Taurus Capricorn/Sagittarius Cancer/Aquarius	Clear purpose and objectives Planned activities commitment to ensure they happen Trust and belief Collegiate relationships Virgo/Leo
	Tradition of isolation and competition Only engage when necessary Belief in partnership but no commitment No sustained effort Low priority Pisces/Scorpio	Meetings about procedures and revising plans Initial enthusiasm not maintained Always about new beginnings, starting over again Club culture; cordial relations Occasional, sporadic activity Aries/Gemini
	LOW	HIGH
	STRUCTURES	

Table 9 Processes and Structures. Adapted from Handscomb G. 2004 (unpublished)

The model is useful as it identifies the processes successful partnerships need to develop over time, secured by a structure that gives direction and rationale for working together. Those preoccupied with structure but without the culture or tradition of trust lack the glue that holds partnership together. In the same way, processes alone are insufficient for effective partnership development, as there is insufficient clarity about why they are working together. The lack of structure at the outset and the absence of training and development about how to work together, contributes to the failure of the majority of partnerships to develop over time. With sustained efforts and commitment by both partners processes and structures become established but in the short lifetime of this initiative they are at best just beginning to

emerge. However some individuals are able to clarify how and why they can collaborate and do so effectively for some tasks.

The development of appropriate and agreed structures and processes may help create stability within the schools as a starting point for future collaboration and interdependence. Appendix 16 (p.291) 'Where are they now' provides a follow up on what happened to the schools after the partnership initiative.

Section 3 The experience of partnership and openness to partnership model.

Involvement in the partnership strategy represents a significant change and challenge for the schools in the study. The research seeks to separate the attitudes individuals hold towards partnership in general, rather than the particular headteacher and school they have been partnered with. The change working that the partnership requires and the challenge it brings further determines the capacity of each partnership to work and learn from each other. This view accords with Myers and Goldstein (1998) who stress the uniqueness of each 'troubled' school and Lodge (1998) who criticises the tendency to see all SCC as if they were one type. The experience of partnership and openness to partnership are here used as attitude dimensions in this partnership matrix Table 10 (p. 176). The model builds on the research evidence about the attitudes and behaviours of the headteachers in the study; they more than any others, set the tone and tenor for the partnerships (Harris and Bennett 2001; Southworth 2005).

1. Experience of partnership and openness to partnership.

Those who have much experience of partnership and are also open to partnership, are advocates of the partnership. The Aquarius head is able to adapt to the changing needs of the three different partner heads from the Cancer School and is determined to patiently 'nudge the partnership along.' In the same way the Leo head adapts to the changing needs of The Virgo School; working first with the established head and then

supporting the new headteacher. The head of The Sagittarius School is enthusiastic and experienced but tends to dominate rather than support the inexperienced and resistant head of The Capricorn School. The Libra headteacher is keen to be involved and has experience of other partnerships; he is prepared to try to work with the Taurus head even though he knows he is not an easy person to work with. The Gemini head is enthusiastic and an active promoter of collaborative networks, but the head of The Aries School is not committed to partnership work.

2. Open to partnership but with little experience of partnership.

Although the head of The Virgo School has limited experience she is open and enthusiastic about partnership working. She has confidence in her partner headteacher at The Leo School and willing to be guided into the benefits of collaboration; she soon becomes an advocate for partnership working in her own school.

3. Resistant to partnership and with little experience of partnership.

The Capricorn headteacher has little experience of partnership and is resistant to working with the head of The Sagittarius School even though she has experience of his school. In particular he wants to find his own way and choose who he works with. The Aries head pays lip service to working with The Gemini School but underneath his actions show resistance to partnership working. In the early stages both the retiring head and the acting head of The Cancer School welcome partnership support from The Aquarius School but the new head is cautious and resistant; in particular she believes mentoring implies weakness and therefore wants no part of that relationship! She prefers to find her own way forward and does not yet see how the engagement with the partner school is addressing her immediate problems. Such resistance may be overcome over time particularly when others identify early successes and begin to view the partnership more positively.

HIGH	E X P E R I E N C E O F P A R T N E R S H I P	4. Resistant but with significant experience SCORPIO TAURUS PISCES	1. Open and experienced LEO AQUARIUS SAGITTARIUS LIBRA GEMINI
		3. Resistant but with little experience CANCER CAPRICORN ARIES	2. Open but with little experience VIRGO
LOW		LOW	OPENESS TO PARTNERSHIP

Table 10 Experience of Partnership and Openness to Partnership

4. Resistant to partnership along with significant experience of partnership.

Those with experience of partnership who are also resistance to a particular partnership are able to block progress. The Scorpio headteacher is experienced in partnership but does not want to work with the failing Pisces School and keeps his distance. The head of the Pisces School has experience of partnership but is sceptical about such strategies. She is particularly critical of her assigned partner; she feels she knows the Scorpio head ‘too well’ and believes she cannot work closely with him. The Taurus head pays lip service to working in partnership with The Libra School but fundamentally believes the partnership will not succeed in this situation; he favours leading a ‘take over’ of The Libra School. The Taurus head becomes increasingly resistant, quickly loses interest and blames The Libra School and the headteacher in particular for the breakdown of the partnership. Those that combine resistance with significant experience are unlikely to change their minds; they make unreliable

partners and are essentially non-starters, unless it is their own idea and they believe it will work.

This matrix provides a model which could be used to predict the potential success or failure of partnerships based on the attitudes, behaviours and prior experiences of these involved. From the effective partner viewpoint, it indicates the inept choice of the heads of The Scorpio School and The Taurus School compared with the headteachers from the Aquarius, Leo, Gemini schools. On the surface, the Sagittarius head has much to recommend her as a partner per se, but her previous involvement with The Capricorn School and her controlling and patronising attitude towards the Capricorn head, makes her an unsuitable partner in this situation. The notion of situational partnerships is explored further in Section 4 (p.177). From the SCC viewpoint, the two experienced heads show contrasting attitudes; the Libra head is likely to be able to work in partnership but the Pisces headteacher is not open to partnership work unless it is with her preferred partner. Those new to headship (in The Cancer, Capricorn and Aries Schools) present their own particular challenges as by definition they are likely to lack experience but their desire to show they can 'make it on their own' provides sufficient resistance to foil partnership possibilities at this early stage in their headship careers. The new head of The Virgo School however shows openness and willingness to find her own way forward through working in partnership with a trusted partner.

Section 4 Situational partnership

This study accords with Harris and Bennett (2001) as it underlines the centrality of leadership in creating the structures, processes and conditions for securing improvement. Leadership provides vision and direction and management that creates processes that establish the 'what' and 'how.' Building on contingency theory

highlighted by Southworth (2005), the uniqueness of school circumstances underlined by Leithwood *et al.* (1999) and the contextual challenges of SCC emphasised by Crow (2005), this model of ‘situational partnership’ is formed.

Positive SCC	Libra/Taurus	Virgo/Leo
Reluctant SCC	Pisces/Scorpio	Aries/Gemini Cancer/Aquarius Capricorn/Sagittarius
	Reluctant ‘effective’ Partner	Positive ‘effective’ Partner

Table 11 Positive/reluctant Matrix

The model is built around the beliefs that leaders hold about the situation and the appropriateness of partnership as it developed as a strategy for improvement in each SCC. From the outset some heads were positive about partnership working, others were reluctant and some changed during the initiative. In Table 10 (p. 176) headteachers were mapped onto a matrix in respect of their experience of partnership working and their openness to partnership working and highlights their attitudes towards their partner. The headteachers are now mapped onto a positive/reluctant matrix as it is concluded that their attitudes about partnership and preferred partners (see Table 12 p.181) pervade the partnerships. Although most partnerships employed partnership managers to organise processes and collaborative activities, insufficient

development of Distributed Leadership (Southworth *ibid*) kept the focus on the 'heroic' model of headteacher to provide the rationale for partnership.

The reluctance of either or both partners was sufficient to severely limit the early development of the partnership although the positive influence of one may help overcome the reluctance of the other. Reluctance is fuelled however when SCC believe their partner does not understand their particular context or has the experience of improving in difficult circumstances also highlighted by Crow (2005), Greenfield (1985) and Harris (2002). Although DfEE (2001) suggested that schools facing challenging circumstances should look to those schools which although facing challenging circumstances have become very successful, all the schools chosen by the LEA to partner SCC were located in circumstances that were less challenging than the circumstances of their partner schools. Tables 1a & 1b (pp. 20-21) reveal that percentages of FSM and SEN are higher in SCC and pupil attendance rates are lower compared to partner schools. Research evidence from the interviews with the headteachers in the study reveals that recruitment and retention of staff is more challenging for SCC and none of the partner schools had falling rolls. This is important as Crow (*ibid*) suggests that headteachers who are not from schools facing challenging circumstances may have a,

limited perspective on what needs to be done as their effectiveness is located in their current school (p.67).

The study highlights the challenging situation for new headteachers, particularly those in SCC. The research concurs with the findings of Hobson, Brown *et al* (2003) who argue that most new headteachers struggle on their own to get to grips with the complexity of the job and as Bright and Ware (2003) assert, mostly learn the hard way, from their mistakes. Despite the opportunity for mentoring and coaching, the heads of The Cancer, Capricorn and Aries Schools are reluctant to engage in these

possible partner activities. Those in schools in Ofsted categories face the most challenging circumstances as has been described by Matthews and Sammons (2004), Myers and Goldstein (1998) and Turner (1998) and question the appropriateness of the partnership strategy. The headteachers in The Pisces School and The Capricorn School in particular seem ‘scarred’ by the experience of inspection in ways outlined by Gray (2000) and appear in denial of their situation, a response identified by Pugh (1998). Such complex and challenging contexts require particular qualities and styles of leadership and it is hypothesised that partners require particular ‘situational’ qualities.

The headteachers in the SCC held their own beliefs and assumptions about their situation and what support they would like from their partner. The LEA however imposed their preferred partner to ‘remedy’ the situation as they saw it. Table 12 (p.181) juxtaposes the preferences of the headteachers in the SCC with these of the LEA.

The Head of AIS stated from the outset that she wanted partners to provide a ‘*challenging intervention*’ and did not accept the rationale for using preferred partners or the need to address unique cultural and situational contexts. This study suggests that where partnerships would benefit from mentoring or coaching (particularly those new to headship) such preferences should not be ignored. A positive mentoring relationship developed between the head of The Virgo School and her partner, however ineffective matching did not lead to mentoring for the other three new head teachers. There was no recognition of the particular support needed for the heads suffering post-Ofsted malaise a point raised by Duffy (1996) or appreciation of Zey’s assertion (1984) that the most effective matches are made by the participants themselves. It is concluded that the formation of future partnerships should pay closer

attention to the ‘situation’ of the SCC, the perceived needs of the SCC and attributes of the partners.

Preferred Partners

SCC preferred partners	LEA preferred partners
The Aries head’s preference was to partner a school that had come out of special measures. Later a partnership with one that had stayed out and continued to improve was seen as beneficial.	The LEA preferred the Gemini head from a nearby competing school. He was unfamiliar with special measures having only worked in relatively successful schools but had a good track record in collaboration.
The Capricorn head preferred a partner of his choice. His relationship with the Sagittarius head was tense since the time he worked as her deputy in The Capricorn School.	The LEA preferred the Sagittarius head as she successfully led The Capricorn school through the Ofsted Inspection. The LEA was blind to the difficult relationship between the two heads.
The Pisces head preferred to build on her existing partnership and did not understand why the LEA does not support this partnership. She does not trust The Scorpio head or want him as a partner.	The LEA preferred the Scorpio head; he has succeeded in ‘turning his school around’ in challenging circumstances. The LEA was unaware of the incompatibility of the two heads and their reluctance to work together.
The Libra head already had a supportive partner and would prefer to work with her and also try to work with the Taurus head. He had reservations about the leadership style of Taurus head. There has been collaboration with The Taurus School but he does not see him as a natural partner.	The LEA’s preference was for the head of The Taurus School. Although they know him as independent, self opinionated and highly critical of the LEA they assumed he was a natural partner. His school has improved although in much more favourable circumstances. The LEA is unaware that he would prefer to take The Libra School over and has no faith in the proposed partnership.
The Cancer School saw immediate benefits from working with The Aquarius School but the new head inherits a partnership that she had not chosen. She would prefer to come to terms with her own situation before working in partnership.	LEA selected a partner to support the acting head and then the new head. Aquarius had a good track record of school improvement in less challenging circumstances and working in collaboration with other successful schools.
The Virgo head was pleased to work with her partner. She saw this as a natural development; she knows and trusts the head of The Leo School.	LEA endorsed the natural partner who was already working with the school. The Leo head had a good track record of working in collaboration in more favourable circumstances.

Table 12

Section 5. A Typology for Partnerships

The models developed here are laced through with factors for effective and ineffective partnerships and build on the school effectiveness and improvement research and perspectives from Sammons *et al.* (1995), Reynolds (1996) Myers (1996) and others on the characteristics of effective and ineffective schools.

In this section the factors and characteristics from the previous models are combined, crosscut and overlaid to produce a typology of partnerships. This seeks to align with the classification of schools generated by Myers (1998) and Stoll and Fink (1996) and attempts to build a typology to characterise and locate the partnerships: as Striving, Swaying, Sinking or Sunk (Table 13 pp.182-3)

The Partnership Typology

The 'striving' partnership- partners trust each other; they value and respect one another's judgements and opinions. The headteachers are determined to capitalise on the opportunity; they align staff to the partnership vision and develop structures and processes to support collaboration. Teachers in both schools are increasingly convinced that the partnership supports their development and achieves a collegiate culture. Engagement is negotiated and flexible. An effective steering group plans innovative activities, deals with concerns and tracks progress. The partnership grows and affects how things are done. Capacity grows within and between. Partnership is neither fad nor fashion; valued by staff who willingly invest their time and effort.

The 'swaying' partnership- working together but it is 'touch and go' whether the partnership will survive. The effective partner is keen to proceed; skilled in partnership work; seeks to align their staff and nudge the partnership along but concerns increase about time and effort involved. Both partners are uneasy about the lack of impact. The SCC is resistant, reluctant to proceed and unhappy about being seen as the 'weak' partner; their approach is half-hearted, unable to put new ideas into practice. Relationships are respectful; often cordial but not collegiate. The partnership lacks processes and/or structures for effective collaboration. Plans for partnership activities are regularly rewritten giving the impression of progress but are bolted on, predictable and seldom move beyond the planning stage.

The ‘sinking’ partnership- initial enthusiasm from the dominant effective partner is gradually drained by the resistance and lack of commitment from the other, who is lukewarm and is seen not to ‘pull his/her weight.’ The SCC blames external factors, believes outsiders have little to contribute and ‘don’t understand what is it like around here.’ The partnership is high on processes but low on structure; the effective partner is unable to halt the decline; the SCC partner plays ‘lip service’ and is resistant to change and reluctant to proceed. The effective partner has increasing concern about being linked to the ‘failing’ SCC. While some belief remains that collaboration may be beneficial in the long run, the partnership lacks leadership and seems to ‘get in the way of’ rather than support improvement. Neither partner has the energy to continue much longer; even the ‘heroic’ partner gives up!

The ‘sunk’ partnership-an inept pairing from the start. The partners feel forced into the partnership but are uncommitted and reluctant to work together. Lip service is paid in order to access funds or establish credibility. The effective partner has experience of partnership but does not believe it is the appropriate strategy for this SCC. The relationship between the headteachers is dysfunctional and characterised by lack of trust and respect. The effective partner may even harbour a desire for ‘take over.’ Although others may try to work collaboratively their efforts are largely unsuccessful. The partnership may build processes for collaboration but lack the structures. Planned activities remain low key, peripheral, often poorly attended or cancelled and eventually cease. Few if any notice this passing:- ‘sunk without trace.’

Table 13

The typology is here applied to the partnerships in this study. The partnerships are classified as ‘natural’ because of previous collaboration and ‘arranged,’ having no previous collaboration (see also Table 4 p. 86).

Striving	Swaying	Sinking	Sunk
• Virgo-Leo	* Cancer-Aquarius * Aries- Gemini	• Capricorn-Sagittarius	* Pisces-Scorpio • Libra-Taurus

- Natural (previous collaboration)
- * Arranged (no previous collaboration)

Table 14 Partnerships located in the typology.

The partnership typology can also be used to identify individual and departmental partnerships that developed between the partner schools. For example a 'striving' partnership developed within the 'sunk' Libra-Taurus partnership and some individual partnerships 'sunk without trace' within the 'striving' Virgo-Leo partnership. This underlines the complexity and possibility of partnership working between schools at different levels and illustrates the use of the typology.

Charter 6 Summary and Conclusions

This research concurs with the views of Mulford and Silins (2005) that educational reforms are more likely to fail in the face of cultural resistance from those in the school. Furthermore the study illustrates graphically how the actions or inactions of teachers, managers and in particular the headteacher,

determine the fate of what happens in schools, including attempts at reform' (p.139).

The activities and behaviours associated with the 'swaying' and 'sinking' partnerships align closely with the conclusions of Harris (2002 p.19) who suggests competing priorities, unclear purposes and inadequate leadership are likely to prevent improvement occurring. In particular the 'sunk' partnership demonstrates how imposed change can induce attempts at sabotage (p.37). Although there were some successes, overall this initiative suffered from the behaviours of those involved, unclear purposes and goals and unreliable matching of schools. The potential of future collaboration has been undermined by this failure, as those involved in swaying, sinking or sunk partnerships can assert 'we did it before and it didn't work.' Such shortcomings lead me to classify this strategy as highly 'unreliable' in contrast to approaches documented by Reynolds (2004) in his work on how to create high reliability schools as the majority of SCC did not have the internal capacity to engage productively in partnership, nor did the majority of partner 'effective' schools have the internal or external capacity to drive their improvement. Hopkins (2001) has drawn attention to the importance of capacity building in the processes of improvement in schools facing challenging circumstances.

In my view this partnership strategy is an example of short term political opportunism on the part of the LEA. The strategy accepts the premise that expertise lies within 'effective' schools and partnership with SCC holds the key to

improvement. It creates the impression of a robust intervention in response to Government demands for collaboration but in reality it does not address the needs or benefit the long-term improvement of the majority of schools involved. The initiative was not thought through and insufficiently informed by school improvement research. The LEA misjudged the capacity of SCC and effective schools to engage and impact within the life span of the initiative and had scant regard for the school's preferred partners. Furthermore the SCC were not partnered by schools facing similar challenging circumstances and becoming very successful (DfEE 2001). As a result, the majority of the partnerships did not continue beyond the LEA funding period.

The evidence from this study supports the conclusions drawn by Reynolds (2004) as he charts the effects of diverse reform efforts for while the study can point to some positive effects and the continued development of the striving partnership, in the majority of schools the initiative was not continued beyond the initial period. Success was found in the partnership where -

the local educators worked together to create the most efficacious interactions (p.1).

This bears out the findings of Stringfield *et al.* (1996) where at the outset the time frame is too short to expect significant change. However the research also concurs with the findings from the DfEE Schools in Challenging Circumstances, Pilot Partnership Initiative (2001) as the collaborative culture was established at least in some partnerships. Appendix 16 (p.291) provides a brief update on the progress of the SCC in the study over the two years following the initial funding period. In terms of partnership culture the 'striving' Virgo- Leo partnership continued and remains central to The Virgo School's improvement; the 'swaying' Cancer-Aquarius partnership survived but remained peripheral to the school improvement plan. All the other partnerships 'sunk.'

The identification of the Striving Partnership in the right circumstances offers hope and confirms that successful and productive partnership is possible. This research gives direction for the creation of such positive relationships and in the tradition of School Effectiveness and School Improvement provides guidance on characteristics that prospective partners can consider and may even aspire to. These characteristics should not be taken as a blueprint for effective partnerships per se; the crucial factor is how they are enacted between schools (Table 15 p.187). The characteristics that typify partnerships that ‘sway’ or ‘sink’ can also be used to identify partnerships that are more or less likely to fail (Table 16 p.188).

Characteristics of effective partnerships

1. Selection of partners	Involvement is voluntary. Partners are involved in their selection and pairing. Their opinions and preferences are listened to.
2. Trust and respect	Partners trust one another; they value and respect one another's judgements and opinions. A partnership of equals, confident and self-reliant.
3. Professional leadership	The partners are determined to capitalise on the partnership opportunity and show commitment to collaborative working with energy and enthusiasm. Partnership is neither fad nor fashion. There are high expectations of partnership working.
4. Shared vision and goals	There is unity of purpose. Consistent practices are established. The structure and rationale for partnership is shared and understood.
5. A collaborative learning environment	Partners are increasingly convinced that the partnership supports their professional development and achieves a collegiate culture. Partners willingly invest their time and effort in preparation and training.
6. Concentration on teaching and learning	Maximum use is made of time spent in partnership working. There is a clear focus on raising achievement through improved learning.
7. Effective management	An effective steering group plans innovative activities and ensures processes are in place. Partnership activities are monitored and evaluated.
8. A learning partnership	Collaborative staff development. Negotiated and flexible.
9. Capacity building	Capacity grows within and between; energy builds and processes are sustainable.

Table 15

Characteristics of ineffective partnerships

1. Inept pairing	Partners are 'forced' into partnership; remain uncommitted, unprepared and reluctant to collaborate.
2. Paying 'lip service'	Lip service is paid in order to access funds or in a vain attempt to achieve credibility as a school improver involved in the latest initiative.
3. Dysfunctional leadership	The partners lack trust and respect for each other. One or other is perceived as not pulling his/her weight. The 'effective' partner may even harbour desires to take over the partner school.
4. Unclear vision and goals	The purpose of partnership is unclear. Structure and processes are not shared.
4. Dependent relationships	The weaker partner blames others for their difficulties and wants others to do things for them. Not a partnership of equals.
5. Ineffective management	There is no steering group. Individuals may drive some initiatives but there are no effective systems for monitoring or evaluation.
6. Time wasting	Time is seen to be wasted; activities get in the way rather than support improvement.
7. Planning but no action	Plans give the impression of progress, but they are bolted on, predictable and seldom move beyond the planning stage.
8. A dysfunctional learning environment	Partners are increasingly convinced that the partnership is not working; it drains their energy and wastes their resources.

Table 16

Both sets of characteristics may also help guide the LEA in the role of brokering and facilitating future partnerships. They can also be used to monitor and evaluate the development of partnerships and in particular the developing role of the School Improvement Partner (SIP)

The New Relationship with Schools –Next Steps (DfES 2005 p.23) is grounded in the Government's desire to bring secondary headteachers into system-wide reform and therefore strengthen and increase the credibility of school improvement services. My research highlights the limited success of headteachers working in partnership albeit with schools on the SCC register. It raises serious questions about the likelihood of the SIP initiative to build local and national capacity

for school improvement. While there is an assessment and development process to prepare SIPs, the programme appeared rushed and not sufficiently thought through. The purpose of the SIP is more clearly defined within the 'New Relationship (DfES 2005) but the critical role of matching schools with partners again falls to the LEA and as my research has shown, this is a complex process and the likelihood of success would seem to be uncertain particularly when working with SCC. The partnership initiative represents an example of a simple top down solution to a complex problem; an over reliance on partnership and collaboration and a 'one size fits all' strategy and contrasts sharply with the London Leadership Strategy where external and careful matching, training and mentoring of Consultant Leaders was central to the initiative. The evaluation carried out by Matthews *et al* (2006) indicates how this had a strongly positive effect on school and leadership development and lead in most cases to-

productive partnerships between educators in the two schools (p. 5).

This is important as the DfES White Paper (October 2005) sets the scene for continued reliance on partnership and collaboration; clearly an area for future research.

The contribution this research has made to knowledge.

This research has broken new ground in several ways. The detailed analysis of the LEA partnership initiative and the development of models and typologies of partnership are innovative and provide fresh insight into the complexity and the possibility of collaboration.

The focus of the research is multifaceted. Schools are relatively complex organisations as they involve the actions of people working within particular social structures along with the expectations and prejudices of these different stakeholders. Attempts at collaborative working between schools add further complexity as this

involves interaction with other sets of people, their structures, prejudices and expectations. Similarly the LEA is a complex organisation and interaction with people there adds a further dimension to the partnership landscape. To seek to understand and capture this complexity, I engaged with a range of perspectives from the School Effectiveness and School Improvement field including theoretical frameworks about change, leadership and culture. The themes I identified and the models and typologies I built illustrate the contribution to knowledge about partnership. Although other research has looked at partnerships between individuals and other institutions (Burton and Brundrett 2002; Winitzky *et al.* 1992; Ghouri 1999; Atkinson 2002; Manthai 1992; Southworth 1995), my research explores this in the context of an LEA strategy for partnership between SCC and effective schools; a very particular type of partnership. I believe my research provides a good counter to the claim that School Effectiveness and School Improvement work necessarily adopts a simple view of educational change and ignores the role of context as argued by Townsend (2001), Thrupp (1999a) and Slee *et al.* (1998). While the LEA Officers who set up the strategy may have held a somewhat simplistic view of how partnership would improve SCC and lacked much knowledge of SE research, the six case studies in my research clearly illustrate the complexity of partnership working and the centrality of understanding context.

At the outset of this thesis I indicated that the existing research into partnership and the factors of effective partnerships is very limited. This study attempts to link school effectiveness and improvement findings and theory with the analysis of partnership effectiveness and illustrate how partnership builds on and is dependent upon pre-existing school effectiveness, measured by a range of outcome indicators such as a rising roll, examination results, value added and inspection

evidence. While such characteristics may be seen as necessary for schools to work independently and effectively, they are not sufficient for the development of interdependence and successful partnership is contingent upon the behaviours and attitudes of those involved, the professional judgement of the LEA and their ability to broker effective partnerships between schools that have the capacity to engage effectively.

The design and methodology used in this research is innovative in that I undertook the research as an insider in the LEA. This privileged role enabled me to access a range of data that might not be available to an external researcher; an issue discussed in Chapter 3. In particular the use of email discussions with SLAs although more limited than I had hoped, provides an innovative tool for data production and has potential to be developed further.

As I simultaneously engaged with the literature and with my data, insights arose which illuminated the complex and uncertain process of brokering and developing partnerships in response to Government imperatives on school improvement. The use of Astrological signs to identify the different schools provided novelty and a playful reminder of the precarious nature of pseudo-scientific and aspirant predictions about the suitability of partners and the vagaries of human attitudes and behaviours. As Southworth (1995 p.79) reminds us getting the match right is unfortunately not a science.

These conclusions contribute to the '*formulation* of understanding' (Pratt 2003 p.19) that arises through my role as researcher and is now shared through this thesis and some subsequent journal articles. At the same time, as a practitioner my aim is primarily the '*utilisation* of understanding' (Pratt op cit p.29) in order to effect change in my own context. This personal learning to which I now turn however is only part of

the outcome, as the implications of the research are likely to be of relevance to those working with SCC elsewhere.

The influence of my research on my professional development

The research process, including data collection, analysis and writing, provides the opportunity to reflect on my beliefs, values and assumptions about intervention, support and partnership for improvement. During the process of undertaking the research and thinking about the information and data collected, I believe my contribution as a professional changed and deepened as has my understanding of the context and culture of the organisation I was working in. My belief in the power of partnership as a strategy for improvement has been questioned by some of the research findings and at the same time reaffirmed. Unlike the Tilbury Initiative, a 'striving partnership' (Section 5 p.182) devised and driven by committed headteachers that was a focus in my earlier studies (Anderson 1996), this initiative illustrates how top down strategies can create reactive cultures that seek short term solutions which may marginalise and undervalue individuals and fail to build commitment. Although it may be inevitable that LEAs will always be in receipt of top down strategies from Central Government, the opportunity remains to re-culture to better meet future agendas, a point well made by Woods and Cribb (2001), DfES (2005) and Audit Commission (1999); this the LEA failed to do in this situation. The assertion of the Head of AIS at the outset that partner Heads '*didn't need to like each other,*' reveals a lack of understanding of how relationships and partnerships work as identified by Bryk and Schneider (2002). The initiative itself did not demonstrate partnership and collaboration in its design, modelling 'done to' rather than 'done with!'

Throughout the study my concern increased about the acceptance and over-reliance on collaboration and partnership solutions despite the lack of evidence of

how they might or had influenced leadership and impacted on practice. I have qualified my belief by highlighting the greater success of the 'situational' partnership (Section 4 p.177), appropriate to the situation and participants, with a collaborative culture defined by processes and structures. Although my power to create this culture within the LEA is limited, I can influence others and model the behaviours I believe are fundamentally important for partnership working. In my engagement with schools, I try to ensure that I listen and understand their situation as they see it (Southworth 2005 and Leithwood *et al.* 1999); seek to work flexibly as a critical friend (MacBeath 1999) and/or non-directive coach (Kanter 1977; Torrance 1984); to promote the learning conversation that builds trust, sets targets and goals, identifies options, selects strategies and secures commitment. As Crow (2005) suggests, this more reliably creates co-learning and is more likely to impact on practice long term. My working with schools is now further informed by subsequent reading in the field of Neuro Linguistic Programming (Andreas and Faulker 1996; McDermott and Jago 2001) and emotional intelligence (Goleman 1996). I now offer training for colleagues in the skills of empathic listening and rapport building and a range of situational consultancy styles that model good practice in partnership working. This is an area I wish to build further on in the future.

In my role as LEA Adviser, I tried to influence the selection and training of the SIPs and by so doing sought to avoid the negative effects of inappropriate and ineffective partnering. A central tenant in the New Relationship with Schools (DfES 2005:18) is the 'single conversation,' a focused dialogue with the SIP about school performance and priorities for the future. It is hoped that the models and typologies developed through this research will prove to be valuable aids to understanding and developing the SIP in practice. The notion of situational partner is particularly

appropriate for SCC and for those new to headship. For example, the dialogue between the SIP and the school in special measures should be informed by research into labelling (Myers and Goldstein 1998; Ouston and Davies 1998; Gray 2000; Duffy 1996 and others), the special professional relationship with HMI (Matthews and Sammons 2004) and my research, which confirms the difficulty SCC have in managing the many offers of help. Those new to headship are likely to be confused by the multiple demands made on them as highlighted by Patterson and West-Burnham (2005) and the range of support offered from the SIP, the LEA Link Adviser, the NCSL Headteacher Induction programme and possibly the Local Headteacher Network and Specialist Schools Outreach plans. There are also unresolved issues about the commitment that a serving headteacher can give to the improvement of other schools as revealed in the studies of Flintham, (2004) and Hartle (2005). My research illustrates the importance of understanding the motives and expectations of those seeking to partner SCC, confirms how engagement is likely to cease when demands increase in either partner's school and reveals how frustration builds when support and advice is not acted upon. While there is an expectation that the SIP engagement will last up to three years, there is no certainty that this will be the case and this will affect commitment to the 'new relationship.' Local Authorities need to be alert and plan to address any and all of these possible eventualities.

My personal journey to the completion of this thesis has been a powerful and formative experience. The research process helped me puzzle matters through and be more insightful. I sought to ensure the data was credible and the conclusions plausible; a trustworthy account based on a series of case studies. The familiarity that I now have with the key elements in the research literature is in itself empowering. The opportunity to engage in reflection and the search for meaning in both the data

and my professional work has been a powerful personal experience, as identified by Walter-Adams (1994 p.197). It has also been a time to consider my attitudes and values, a conclusion drawn also by O'Hanlon (1994 p.283) and enabled me to recognise the strengths and limitations of my own views and actions and those of others. I have been greatly helped by the wise counsel of my supervisor as critical friend (MacBeath 1999) and collaborator in pursuit of meaning (Winter 1987 p.10). This approach is in line with the current trend in ethnographic interpretation and representation when the researcher engages in self-reflexive examination of his or her role (Gerstl-Pepin and Gunzenhauser 2002 p.137).

Closing remarks

It would be productive to undertake further research into the impact and effectiveness of SIPs within the New Relationship with schools (DfES, 2005). Early signs confirm that in the three Local Authorities where I now work as a SIP, the role is closely aligned with their previously established processes and practices in the tradition of the School Link Adviser/Inspector and my concern is that the engagement may become overtly 'inspectorial.' As such this may not capture the new relationship and indeed maintain the status quo rather than change current practice; as Fullan (2001) confirms:

structure does make a difference, but it is not the main point.
Transforming the culture- changing the way we do things around
here- is the main point. I call this re-culturing (p.44)

Woods and Cribb (2001 p.9) emphasise the need for Local Authorities to re-culture; behaving in line with established and existing practice undermined the success of this initiative and is likely, if unchallenged, to hinder the success of future initiatives and as such remains a potential threat to their very existence. It is beyond the scope of this research to delve further into the culture of the Local Authority, but this is a worthwhile area for future inquiry particularly in the light of their changing role.

To provide some closure for those interested to know how the SCC in the study have fared since their involvement in the partnership strategy, I have included a brief summary of 'where they are now' (appendix 16 p.291). Here too is an area for future inquiry.

As stated in Chapter 1, my research is of interest to those involved in school effectiveness and improvement and will contribute to discussions on collaboration. An article in a national journal could raise awareness of over-reliance and acceptance of collaboration and top-down initiatives and introduce the models and typologies that have been developed that help illuminate ways to support effective practice. A short article and presentation to colleagues in the Advisory Service would encourage them to reflect on their practice. The outcomes of my research surprised and challenged my beliefs and I hope to return to this in my future writing.

Bibliography

- Ainscow, M., Hopkins, D., Southworth, G. and West, M. (1994) Creating the Conditions for School Improvement. London, David Fulton.
- Anderson, D.A. (1996) The Tilbury Initiative. A case study of school improvement during the first year of the programme. M.Sc. dissertation (unpublished)
- Anderson, D.A. (2000) Education'R'Us. A case study of a failing school as it moved from special measures to closure. Ed.D. I.F.S. (unpublished)
- Anderson, G.L. (1998) 'Towards authentic participation: Deconstructing the discourses of participatory reform in education.' American Educational Research Journal, **35**(4).
- Andreas, S. and Faulkner, C. (1996) NLP: The New Technology of Achievement. London, Nicholas Brealey.
- Audit Commission (1999) Held in Trust, the LEA of the Future.
- Atkinson, M., Wilkin A., Stott A., Doherty P. and Kinder K: NFER, Multi-agency Working: A detailed study (LGA Research Report, **29**, 2002)
- Ball, S. (1983). Case Study Research in Education: Some Notes and Problems, in M. Hammersley (ed.) The Ethnography of Schooling. Driffield, Nuffield.
- Barber, M. (1998) 'The Dark Side of the Moon: Imagining the End to Failure in Urban Education,' in L. Stoll and K. Myers (eds.) No Quick Fixes. London, Falmer Press.
- Barber, M. and Dann, R. (Eds.). (1996) Raising educational standards in the inner city. Practical initiatives in action. London: Cassell.
- Barth, R.S. (1990) Improving Schools from Within. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Bell, J. (1987) Doing your Research Project. Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Bentley, T. (2003) The purposes of networks and their contribution to collaborative capacity, DEMOS, London (unpublished)
- Bernstein, B. (1968). 'Education cannot compensate for society.' New Society, **378**, 344-347.
- Berwick, G. (2004) An Evaluation of the consultant leaders' programme: Paper produced for London Challenge, April, 2004.

- Bollen, R. (1989) School Improvement: A Dutch case in international perspective. Leuven/Amersfoort:Acco.
- Bowe, R., Gewirtz, S., and Ball, S.J. (1994) British Journal of Sociology of Education.**15** (1)
- Bright, T. and Ware, N. (2003) 'Were you prepared?' Findings from a national survey of head teachers, NCSL Research Associate Reports. Nottingham: NCSL
- Brookfield, S.A. (1987) Developing Critical Thinkers: 'Challenging adults to explore alternative ways of thinking and acting.' Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Bryk, A.S. and Schneider, B. (2002) Trust in School: A core Resource for Improvement. New York, Russell Sage.
- Bryman, A. (1988) Quality and Quantity of Social Research. London, Unwin Hughes.
- Burton, N and Brundrett, M. (2002) The Beacon School Experience. Norfolk, Peter Francis Publishers.
- Busher, H. (2002) 'Ethics of research in education,' in Coleman, M. and Briggs, A.R.J. (eds.) Research Methods in Education Management and Policy: Retrospect and Prospect. London, Falmer Press.
- Bush, T., Briggs, A. *et al* (2003) 'External Evaluation of the New Visions Induction to Headship Pilot Programme: Cohort One.NCSL' in M.J. Coles and G. Southworth, Developing Leadership. Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Clegg, S., Tan, J. and Saeidi, S. (2002) 'Reflecting or Acting? Reflective Practice and Continuing Professional Development in Higher Education.' Reflective Practice **3** (1):
- Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1994) Research Methods in Education. London, Routledge.
- Coleman, J.S., Campbell, E., Hobson, C.' McPartland, J., Mood,D., Weinfeld, F. and York, R. (1996) Equality of Education Opportunity. National Centre for Educational Studies. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington
- Covey, S.R. (1992) The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. London, Simon & Schuster Ltd.
- Crawford, M. and Earley, P. (2004) 'Headteacher performance management: an investigation of the role of the External Adviser,' School Leadership and Management, **24** (4) 337-390.

- Crow, G.M. (2005) 'Developing leaders for schools facing challenging circumstances,' in M.J. Coles and G. Southworth Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow. Berkshire, Open University Press.
- Creemers, B. P. M. (1994) The Effective Classroom. London: Cassell.
- Crow, G.M. and Matthews, L.J. (1998) 'Finding Ones way. How mentoring can lead to dynamic leadership' in M.J. Coles and G. Southworth, Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow. Berkshire, Open University Press.
- Crozier, G. (1998) 'Parents and Schools: Partnership or surveillance?' in Partnership as an Intervention Strategy in Self-Managing Schools, in H.S. Timperley and M.J. Robinson, School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 2003, **14** (3).
- Day, C., Harris, A., Hadfield, M. , Tolley, H. and Beresford, J. (2000) Leading Schools in a time of change. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Datnow, A. (1999). 'How schools chose externally developed reform designs.' In Partnership as an Intervention Strategy in Self-Managing Schools, H.S. Timperley and M.J. Robinson, School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 2003, **14** (3).
- Datnow, A., Hubbard, L. and Mehan, H. (1998) Education Reform implementation: A Co-construction process. Santa Cruz, CA University of California, Centre for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence
- Derrington, C., (2000) NFER, 'The LEA Contribution to School Improvement-a role worth fighting for.' LGA Research Report 9 in H. Lownsbrough, and J. Huber, Networked LEAs: Partnership working and collaborative learning in LEAs. DEMOS working paper (2003)
- DfEE, Excellence in Cities (1999)
- DfEE, Code of Practice on LEA –School Relations (1998, revised 2000)
- DfEE, Transforming Secondary Education, pamphlet of a speech by David Blunkett. (March 2000)
- DfEE, Schools Building on Success (2001)
- DfEE, Schools in Challenging Circumstances. Pilot Partnership Initiatives (2001)
- DfES, A New Relationship with Schools: Next Steps (2005)
- DfES, Higher Standards, Better Schools for all. More choice for parents and pupils. White paper, October 2005)

- Duffy, M. (Ed.) (1997) A Better System of Inspection. Ofsted.
- Dunleavy, P. and O'Leary, B. (1997). Theories of the State. Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Earley, P., Evans, J., Collarbone, P., Gold, A., and Halpin, D. (2002) Establishing the Current State of School Leadership in England: Research Report No.336. DfES.
- Earley, P. and Weindling, D. (2004) Understanding School Leadership, London, PCP/Sage
- Earley, P. (1997) 'External inspections, failing schools and the role of governing bodies.' School Leadership and Management, **17**(3):387-400.
- Elliott, J. (1990). 'Teachers as Researchers: Implications for Supervision and Teacher Education.' Teaching and Teacher Education **6**(1): 1-26.
- Elliott, J. (1990) 'Validating Case Study.' Westminster Studies in Education **13**.
- Elliott, J. (1996) 'School effectiveness research and its critics: alternative visions of Schooling', Cambridge Journal of Education **26** (2):199-224.
- Evers, C. and Lakomski, G. (2000) 'A plea for strong leadership.' Educational Leadership, **61** (3):6-10.
- Fiddler, B. and Atton, T. (1999) Poorly Performing Staff in Schools and How to Manage them. London, Routledge.
- Fiddler, B. and Atton, T. (2004) , The Headship Game: the challenges of Contemporary school leadership. London, Routledge Falmer.
- Fiddler, B. and Jones, J. (2005) 'Second headship: second time around or a new learning experience?' Management in Education, **19** (1)
- Fitz-Gibbon, C.T. (1992) 'School effects at A Level: genesis of an information system?' in D. Reynolds and P. Cuttance (eds.) School Effectiveness: Research, Policy and Practice. London: Cassell.
- Flitham, A. (2004) 'Postmodernist portfolio people: Sustainability and succession in school leadership,' Management in Education, **18** (3):12-16.
- Fontana, A. and Frey, J.H.(1994) 'Interviewing The Art of Science,' in N. Denzin (ed.), Handbook of Qualitative Research. London, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Fullan, M. (1991) The New Meaning of Educational Change. London, Cassell.
- Fullan, M. (1992) Successful School Improvement. Buckingham, Open University Press.

- Fullan, M. (1999) Change Forces: The sequel. Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.
- Fullan, M. (2001) Leading in a Culture of Change. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2005) Leadership and Sustainability: System thinkers in action. London PCP/Sage.
- Gadamer, H-G. (1975) Truth and Method. London: Sheed & Ward.
- Gerstl-Pepin, C.I. and Gunzenhauser, M.G. (2000). 'Collaborative team ethnography and the paradoxes of interpretation.' International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education **15**(2):137-154
- Ghouri, N. (1999) 'Beacon Schools battle to cope with success,' The Times Educational Supplement, 23rd April, in N. Burton and M. Brundrett The Beacon Schools Experience. Norfolk, Peter Francis Publishers,
- Goldman, D. (1996) Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ. London, Bloomsbury.
- Gray, J. and Wilcox, B. (eds.). (1995) Good school bad school: Evaluating performance and encouraging improvement. Buckingham: OUP.
- Gray, J., Goldstein, H. and Jesson, D. (1996a) 'Changes and Improvement in school Effectiveness: Trends over five years', Research Papers in Education **11** (1):35-51.
- Gray, J. (1990) 'The quality of schooling: Frameworks for judgements.' British Journal of Educational Studies, **38**(3):204-223.
- Gray, J., Hopkins, D., Reynolds, D., Wilcox, B., Farrell, A. and Jesson, D. (1999) Improving Schools: Performance and Potential. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Gray, J. (2000) 'Causing Concern but Improving,' A review of School's Experiences. Research Report RR188 DfEE.
- Greenfield, W.D. (1985) 'The moral socialisation of school administrators,' in M. J. Coles and G. Southworth Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow. Berkshire, Open University Press.
- Griffiths, M. (1998) Educational Research for Social Justice: getting off the fence. Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Guskey, T.R. (2000) Evaluating Professional Development. Thousand Oakes, CA: Corwin Press.

- Hammersley, M. (2003). 'Recent Radical Criticism of Interview Studies: any implications for the sociology of education?' British Journal of Sociology of Education **24** (1):119-124
- Handscomb, G. (2004) 'Collaboration and Networking in Essex.' Essex LEA (unpublished)
- Hargreaves, D. (1998) 'Creative professionalism: The role of teachers in the knowledge society.' Arguments **22**. London, DEMOS.
- Hargreaves, D. (1995) 'School culture, school effectiveness and school improvement,' School Effectiveness and School Improvement, **6** (1)
- Harri-Augustine, S. and Thomas, L.F. (1991) Learning Conversations: The self organised way to personal and organisational growth. London, Routledge.
- Harris, A. (2002) School Improvement. What's in it for schools? London, Routledge.
- Harris, A. and Bennett, N. (eds) (2001) School Effectiveness and School Improvement: Alternative Perspectives. London, Cassell.
- Hartle, F. (2005) Shaping up to the future: A guide to roles, structures and career development in secondary schools, NCSL, Nottingham.
- Hatch, T. (1998) 'The differences in theory that matter in the practice of school Improvement' Partnership as an Intervention Strategy in Self-Managing Schools, H.S. Timperley and M.J. Robinson, M School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 2003, **14** (3).
- Hay, J. (1995) Transformational Mentoring: Creating developmental alliances for changing organisational cultures. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Haydn, T. (2001) 'From a very peculiar department to a very peculiar school: Transference issues arising out of a study of an improving school,' School Leadership & Management, **21** (4): 415-439.
- Hobson, N., Brown, E. *et al.* (2003) Issues for early head ship: Problems and support strategies. Nottingham: NCSL.
- Hopkins, D. (2001) School Improvement for real. London, Cassell.
- Hopkins, D. and Harris, A. (1997). 'Improving the Quality of Education for all,' Support for Learning, **12** (4) in A. Harris (2002) School Improvement, What's in it for schools? London, Routledge.
- Hopkins, D., Ainscow, M. and West, M. (1996) 'Unravelling the complexities of School improvement: a case study of the IQEA Project' in Organisational Effectiveness and Improvement in Education, Berkshire, Open University Press.

- Hopkins, D., Ainscow, M. and West, M. (1994) School improvement in an Era of Change. London: Cassell.
- Hitchcock, G. and Hughes, D. (1989) Research and the Teacher. London, Routledge.
- Jencks, C., Smith, M., Ackland, H., Bane, M.J., Cohen, D., Gintis, H., Heynes, D. and Micholson, S. (1971) Inequality. London, Allen Lane.
- Jorgensen, D. (1989) Participant Observation. Newbury Park, Sage.
- Joyce, B., Calhoun, E., and Hopkins, D. (1999) The new structure of school Improvement. Inquiring schools and achieving students. Buckingham: OUP.
- Kanter, R. (1977) 'Men and Women of the Corporation,' in M.J. Coles and G. Southworth, Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow, Berkshire, Open University Press.
- Kitwood, T.M. (1977) 'Values in adolescent life: towards a critical description' in L. Cohen and L. Manion Research Methods in Education, London, Routledge
- Kogan, M. (1994) 'Researching the powerful in education and elsewhere,' in G. Walford (ed.) Researching the Powerful in Education. London, University College London Press.
- Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. and Steinbach, R. (1999) Changing Leadership for Changing Times. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Leithwood, K. (1995) 'Preparing school leaders: what works? Connections 3 (Spring) in M.J. Coles and G. Southworth Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow. Berkshire, Open University Press.
- Leithwood, K. and Levin, B. (2004) Approaches to the Evaluation of Leadership Programs and Leadership Effects. (prepared for the DfES)
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E. (1985) Naturalistic Inquiry. Beverly Hills CA, Sage.
- Lodge, C. (1998) 'What's wrong with our schools? Understanding 'Ineffective' and 'Failing' Schools,' in L. Stoll and K. Myers (eds.) No Quick Fixes. London, The Falmer Press.
- Louis, K.S. and Miles, M.B. (1992) Improving the Urban High School: What works and why, London: Cassell.
- Lownsbrough, H and Huber, J. (2003) Networked LEAs: Partnership working and collaborative learning in LEAs. DEMOS working paper (unpublished).

- Luttrell, W. (2000). 'Good Enough' Methods of Ethnographic Research.' Harvard Educational Review 70 (4):499-523.
- MacBeath, J. (ed.) (1998) Effective School Leadership: Responding to change, London, Paul Chapman.
- MacBeath, J. (1999) Schools must speak for themselves. London, Routledge.
- Maden, M. (ed.) (2001) Success Against the Odds- Five Years On. London: Routledge.
- Maden, M. and Hillman, J. (1996). Lessons in Success. In National Commission on Success, Success against the odds: Effective schools in disadvantaged areas. London: Routledge.
- Matthews, P. and Sammons, P. (2004) Improvement through Inspection: An evaluation of the impact of Ofsted's work. Ofsted Publications.
- Matthews, P. and Sammons, P. (2005) Survival of the Fittest: the differential improvement of schools causing concern in England. The London Review of Education 3 (2):159-176. London, Routledge.
- Matthews, P., Sammons, P., Gu, Q., Day, C. and Smith, P. (2006) Supporting Leadership and Securing Quality: An evaluation of the impact of aspects of the London Leadership Strategy. NCSL.
- Manthei, J. (1992) 'The mentor teacher as learner,' in M. Fullan, Change Forces: Probing the depths of Educational Reform. London, Falmer Press.
- MacGilchrist, B., Mortimore, P., Savage, J., and Beresford, C. (1995) Planning Matters. The impact of development planning in primary schools. London: Paul Chapman.
- McCarthy, M.M. (1999) The evolution of educational leadership programs, In J. Murphit and K.S. Louis (eds) Handbook of Research on Educational Administration. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- McCarthy, M.M. (2002) Educational leadership preparation programs: a glance at the past with an eye on the future. Leadership and Policy in Schools 1(3): 201-221.
- McDermott, I and Jago, W. (2001) The NLP Coach: A comprehensive guide to personal well-being and professional success. London, Piatkus.
- Mitchell, C. and Sackney, L. (2000) 'Profound Improvement: Capacity for a Learning Community' in A. Harris, School Improvement. What's in it for schools? London, Routledge.

- Mortimore, P. (1995) Effective Schools: current impact and future potential, The Director's Inaugural Lecture, Institute of Education University of London, Formara Ltd.
- Mortimore, P. (1998) The road to improvement, reflections on school Effectiveness. Lisse, Swetz & Zeitlinger.
- Mortimore, P., Sammons, P., Stoll, L., Lewis, D. and Ecob, R. (1988) School Matters: The Junior Years. Wells: Open Books. Reprinted (1994) London, Paul Chapman .
- Mortimore, P. and Whity, G. (1997) Can schools improvement overcome the effects of disadvantage? Institute of Education, University of London.
- Myers, K. (1996) School Improvement in Practice, Schools Make a Difference Project. London, The Falmer Press.
- Myers, K. and Goldstein, H. (1998) 'Who's Failing?' in L. Stoll and K. Myers (eds.) No Quick Fixes. (1998) London, The Falmer Press.
- Mulford, B. (2003) School Leaders: Changing roles and impact on teacher and school effectiveness. Education and Training Policy Division, OECD.
- Mulford, B. and Silins, H. (2005) 'Developing Leadership for organisational learning' in M.J. Coles and G. Southworth, Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow. Berkshire, Open University Press.
- National College for School Leadership (2005) The impact of participation in Consultant Leaders' development programme. Nottingham, NCSL.
- Nuttall, D., Goldstein, H., Prosser, R. and Rabash, J. (1989) 'Differential School Effectiveness', International Journal of Educational Research **13**: 769-76.
- Oakley, A. (2000) Experiments in knowing: gender and methods in the social sciences. Cambridge, Polity.
- OECD (2001) 'New Management Approaches.' What works in Education Series. OECD, Paris.
- Ofsted Report 115217 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115222 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115228 www.ofsted.gov.uk

- Ofsted Report 115236 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115232 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115236 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115323 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115324 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115333 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115345 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115361 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Ofsted Report 115376 www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Office for Standards in Education (1997). From failure to success, London, Ofsted.
- Office for Standards in Education (1999), Making Headway, London, Ofsted.
- Office for Standards in Education (1999) Lessons learned from special measures. London, Ofsted.
- Office for Standards in Education (1999a) The Annual Report of HMCI, London: Ofsted.
- Office for Standards in Education (2001) Local Education Authority Support for School Improvement. London, Ofsted.
- Office for Standards in Education (2003) Leadership and Management: What inspection tells us. London, Ofsted.
- Office for Standards in Education (2003b) Inspecting Schools: Handbook for inspecting secondary schools. London, Ofsted.
- Office for Standards in Education (2004) The National Primary Strategy and the role of Consultant Leaders, London, Ofsted.
- Office for Standards in Education (2004a) The Annual Report of HMCI 2003/4, London, The Stationary Office.
- Office for Standards in Education (2005) The Annual Report of HMCI 2004/5, London, The Stationary Office.
- O'Hanlon, C. (1994) 'Reflections and action in research: is there a moral responsibility to act?' Educational Action Research 2 (2):281-289

- Ouston, J. and Davies, J. (1998) 'OfSTED and afterwards? School's responses to inspection, in School improvement after inspection, Earley, P. (ed.) Newbury, Sage.
- Paechter, C. (2000). 'Moving the goalposts: carrying out curriculum research in a period of constant change.' British Educational Journal **26** (1): 25-38
- Patton, M.Q. (1990) Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. Newbury, Sage.
- Patterson, F. and West-Burnham, J. (2005) 'Developing beginning leadership' in M.J. Coles and G. Southworth, Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow. Berkshire, Open University Press.
- Phillips, R. (1998) 'The Politics of history: some methodological and ethical dilemmas in elite-based research.' British Educational Research Journal **24** (1): 5-9
- Pratt, N. (2003). 'On Martyn Hammersley's Critique of Bassey's Concept of the Fuzzy Generalisation.' Oxford Review of Education **29** (1): 27-32.
- Pugh, S. (1998) 'Failing and Failures: the conflict between care and the curriculum,' in L. Stoll and K. Myers (Eds.) No Quick Fixes. London, The Falmer Press.
- Quicke, J. (2000) 'A New Professionalism for a Collaborative Culture of Organisational Learning in Contemporary Society.' Educational Management and Administration **28**(3): 299-315
- Renzetti, C. and Lee, R. (eds.) (1993). Researching Sensitive Issues. London, Sage.
- Reynolds, D. (1976) 'The Delinquent School,' in P. Woods, (Ed.) The process of Schooling. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Reynolds, D. (1982) 'School Effectiveness Research: a review of the literature,' School Organisation and management Abstracts 1
- Reynolds, D. (1995) 'The effective school: an inaugural lecture' in Evaluation and Research in Education, **9**(2): 57-73.
- Reynolds, D. (1996) 'Turning Around Ineffective Schools. Some evidence and some speculation,' in L. Stoll and K. Myers (eds.). No Quick Fixes. London, The Falmer Press.
- Reynolds, D. (1998) 'The Study and Remediation of Ineffective Schools: Some Further Reflections,' in L. Stoll and K. Myers (eds.) No Quick Fixes. London, The Falmer Press.

- Reynolds, D. (2004) 'The High Reliability Schools Project: Some preliminary results and analyses.' NSIN Research Matters. **22**.
University of London.
- Rosenholtz, S.J. (1989) Teachers' Workplace: the Social Organisation of Schools.
New York, Longman.
- Sammons, P. (1989). 'Ethical Issues and statistical work,' in R.G. Burgess (ed.)
The Ethics of Educational Research. London, Falmer Press.
- Sammons, P., Hillman, J. and Mortimore, P. (1995) Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A review of School Effectiveness Research.
London Institute of Education for Ofsted
- Sammons, P., Thomas, S. and Mortimore, P. (1997) Forging Links: Effective Schools and Effective departments. London, Paul Chapman.
- Schon, D. A. (1991) The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action.
Aldershot, Avebury.
- Schein, E. (1985) Organisational Culture and Leadership. San Francisco, Jossey Bass.
- Scheurich, J.J. (1997) Research Methods in the Postmodern. London, Falmer Press.
- Scott, D. (1996) Methods and data in educational research, in D.Scott and R.Usher (eds.) Understanding Educational Research. London, Routledge.
- Senge, P.M. (1990) The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organisation. London, Century Business.
- Sergiovanni, T.J. (2000) The Lifeworld of Leadership. London, Jossey-Bass.
- Skeggs, B. (1994). Situating the Production of the Feminist Ethnography, in M. Maynard and J. Purvis (eds.) Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective. London, Taylor and Francis: 72-92.
- Slee, R. and Weiner, G. with Tomlinson, S. (eds). (1998) School Effectiveness for whom? Challenges to the school effectiveness and school improvement movements. London: Falmer Press.
- Smith, D.J. and Tomlinson, S. (1989) The School Effect: A Study of Multi-Racial Comprehensives. London: Policy Study Institute.
- Southworth, G. (1995) 'It takes two to tango,' in Managing Schools Today **5** (1)
- Southworth, G. (2005) 'Overview and conclusions' in M.J. Coles and G. Southworth, Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow.
Berkshire, Open University Press.

- Stark, M. (1998) 'No slow fixes either: How Failing Schools in England are being restored to health,' in L. Stoll, L and K. Myers, (eds) No Quick Fixes. London, The Falmer Press.
- Stoll, L. (1998) 'School Culture,' in SIN Research Matters, **9**, London Institute of Education.
- Stoll, L. (1999) 'Raising Our Potential: Understanding and developing Capacity for lasting Improvement,' in School Effectiveness and School Improvement, **10** (4).
- Stoll, L. and Fink, D. (1996) Changing our Schools. Linking school effectiveness and school improvement. London, The Falmer Press.
- Stoll, L. and Fink, D. (1998) 'The Cruising School.' in L. Stoll and K. Myers (eds) No Quick Fixes: Perspectives on Schools in difficulty. London, The Falmer Press.
- Stoll, L. and Myers, K. (eds.) (1998) No Quick Fixes: Perspectives on Schools in difficulty. London, The Falmer Press.
- Stringfield, S., Ross, S., and Smith, L. (eds.) (1996) Bold Plans for school restructuring. The new American schools design. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Stringfield, S. (1998) 'Organisational learning and current reform efforts' in K.S. Louis Schools as Learning Communities. Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger
- Taggart, B. and Sammons, P. (1999) 'Evaluating the impact of a raising school standards initiative,' in R. Bosker, B. Creemers and S. Stringfield (eds.) Enhancing Educational Excellence, Equity and Efficiency Evidence from evaluations of Systems and schools in change. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press.
- Teddlie, C. and Reynolds, D. (2000) The International Handbook of School Effectiveness Research. London: Falmer Press.
- Teddlie, C and Reynolds, D. (2001) 'Reflections on the Critics, and Beyond Them,' in School Effectiveness and School Improvement, **12** (1): 99-113. Netherlands, Swets and Zeitlinger.
- Teddlie, C. and Stringfield, S. (1993) Schools make a difference: Lessons learned from a 10-year study of school effects. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Timperley, H., Robinson, V., and Bullard, T. (1999) 'Strengthening education in Managere and Otara' in H.S. Timperley and M.J. Robinson, School Effectiveness and School Improvement 2003, **14** (3).

- Timperley, H.S. and Robinson, M.J. School Effectiveness and School Improvement 2003, **14** (3).
- Torrance, E.P. (1984) Mentor relationships: How they add creative achievement, endure, change and die, in M.J. Coles and G. Southworth, Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow. Berkshire, Open University Press.
- Townsend, T. (2001) Satan or Saviour? An Analysis of Two Decades of School Effectiveness Research. School Effectiveness and School Improvement **12**(1):115-129. Netherlands, Swets and Zeitlinger.
- Thomas, G. (2002). 'Theory's Spell-on qualitative inquiry and educational research.' British Educational Research Journal **28** (3): 419-34
- Thrupp, M. (1999a) Schools make a difference: Let's be realistic! Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Thrupp, M. (2001) 'Sociological and Political Concerns about School Effectiveness Research: Time for a New Research Agenda.' School Effectiveness and School Improvement. **12** (1):7-40. Netherlands, Swets and Zeitlinger.
- Turner, L. (1998) 'Turning around a struggling school: a case study,' in L. Stoll and K. Myers (eds) No Quick Fixes. London, The Falmer Press.
- Usher, R (1996) 'A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research' in D. Scott and R. Usher (eds.) Understanding Educational Research. London, Routledge.
- Walker, K., Shakotko, D. and Pullman, E. (1998) 'Towards a fuller understanding of trust and trustworthiness,' in A. Harris School Improvement, what's in it for schools? London, Routledge.
- Watson, N. and Fullan, M. (1992) 'Beyond school district-university partnerships,' in M. Fullan, Change Forces, Probing the Depths of Educational Reform. London, The Falmer Press.
- Watford, C. (1998) 'Rising from the Ashes,' in L. Stoll and K. Myers (eds.) (1998) No Quick Fixes. London, The Falmer Press.
- Waters-Adams, S. (1994). 'Collaboration and action research: a cautionary tale.' Educational Action Research **2** (2):195-210.
- Weinding, D. (2004) 'Leadership development in Practice: Trends and innovations,' in M. J. Coles and G. Southworth, Developing Leadership, Creating the schools of tomorrow. Berkshire, OUP.

- Winnicott, D.W. (1995) 'The maturational processes and the facilitating environment,' New York, International Universities Press.
- Winitzky, N., Stoddart, T and O'Keefe, P. (1992) 'Leadership in the New Science,' in M. Fullan, Change Forces, Probing the Depths of Educational Reform. London, The Falmer Press.
- Winter, R. (1987). Action Research and the Nature of Social Inquiry. Aldershot, Gower.
- Woods, D. and Cribb, M. (eds.) (2001) Effective LEAs and School Improvement: Making a difference. London, Routledge/Falmer Press.
- Zey, M.G. (1984) 'The Mentor Connection,' in M. J. Coles and G. Southworth, Developing Leadership, creating the schools of tomorrow. London, Open University Press.

Appendix 1

Interview: Head of the Advisory and Inspection Service

**Paginated
blank pages
are scanned
as found in
original thesis**

**No information
is missing**

Interview with Head of Advisory Service.....Partnership Strategy in the LEA.....Date May '02

Q1 Why has the LEA gone down the partnership route as the strategy for improvement in Sec SCC? Who has driven it? . Where has the belief come from?

What do you believe about 'transferability'

The view from the LEA is that from our experience, when there is a weak management team, probably reflecting a weak Head, you need to get good people onto the management team. Ideally a set of people. We have reservations about the effectiveness of the Advisory service, the best they can do is go in, and come out. That sort of support is slow at bringing about change from within. Eg XXXXXXXXXXXX had 90 plus advisory days, and there was not enough change...and the school went into SM. Significant amounts of time are needed, and the LEA does not have that sort of resource in the Advisory Service. What was needed was experts from other schools, doing the LEA job, with the LEA driving it along, providing the funding etc.

The particular partnership with XXXX was driven by the LEA. Post SuperHead appealed to his ego, and providing a strategy for XXXX. The original idea was for XXXXXX to go in as Head, but it then became a different model. SuperHeads have not worked in some very difficult schools. XXXX was a big challenge, it had already amalgamated, money had been put in.....there were a number of high risk factors. It was a risk also for XXXXXX but he was such an ego maniac.

This all motivated other Heads who then wanted to be involved.

Transferability, other effective schools have already got systems that are needed, and they need to be driven through. They have additional capacity, they can do fire fighting but they can also develop strategy. They can support NQTs, GTC etc. They have models and can do training in a way that the LEA cannot do. In XXXX this all had to be high profile

The LEA wanted to target schools in the top 10 Value Added group, who were not already 'close' to the LEA. XXXXX targeted the strong, successful, mainly ex GM heads who had not been working closely with the LEA. This could benefit the schools but also place the AIS more closely with IIT Sec. (the other agenda)

A paper was put together for XXXX, on what we were looking for from Twinning arrangements

Heads were also written to and asked if they were willing and interested in working with the LEA on school improvement.

Q2. Who decides on the Partnerships? How are they put together? Is there a contract?

The partnerships were somewhat opportunistic, they needed ambitious Heads, willing to get involved, able to persuade others, take Governors along etc. They have to be strong.

There was some thought about the personalities involved, but this is not necessary. It's not whether they like each other that's important. It is being set up by the LEA,. It is an intervention. It is the LEAs duty to intervene, it is the code of practice, intervening and promoting self autonomy, it's about partnerships developing self autonomy

Q3. How are schools identified a suitable partners?

As I said before, I wrote to the Heads, and 23 responded showing interest in all sorts of things. Some have contracts others don't, but they all have clear obligations.

XXXXX also spoke to the XXX consortium, and some of the HTs there were interested.

I prefer twinning rather than 'Partnership.' It is more value free, for a new HT as part of the solution, partnership works OK. But for an old Headteacher where the Head is part of the problem, then that is different. The LEA are paying, it is part of the recovery programme to come out of SCC. The Governors do not always understand this, they don't fully understand the partnership. It can be presented differently for different audiences. Parents may have it presented one way, pupils another. Partnership may be old fashioned and lack rigour.

Q4. What do you understand by a 'failing school or SCC?' Why do schools get into this situation where they are SCC?

Its about context, competition, the wrong balance of staff and leadership. We have been too laid back for so long about SCC, some have been in a mess for too long. Again they have not got the capacity to effect change and improvement. I was told that XXXXX didn't know how to do intervention, but there are some 'green shoots.' XXXXX was thought of at being fine at development but not intervention. The key data wasn't there to identify what needed to be done, we lost about 10 months. We are better at identifying schools close to the SCC boundary

Q5. What are the indicators of the effective school that makes it suitable as a partner?

Good value added

*Good Ofsted
High profile
HT up for it.*

Q6 What are the essential qualities for effect an effective partnership

- *Needs to part of the SIP*
- *Part of the recovery plan*
- *Linked to the LEA support plan and Grant 1*
- *The LEA has a continuum of role, at one extreme 'heavy' when the need arises. Schools involved are not LEA people. The LEA provides the funds etc. and they are schools that work together.*

Q.7 Is partnership another form of Mentoring or Coaching?

It could be partly mentoring, elements of coaching could also be there. It may not be at HT level. As Fullen said 'you don't water a stone.' (reference here to a particular HT who is seen as part of the problem.)

The important thing is challenge, not too much 'pally' collusion. Part of the mixture of pressure and support. There is no assumption that the HT actuallyt goes into the other school. The Head may work in a strategic way with planning, 'mentoring and coaching' may happen for others. In another it could be KS3 and a commitment to pool resources.

Q.8 To what extent are the 'partnerships' imposed on either party? ie the SCC or the 'effective' school?

We don't have the power to impose, the only power we have is to with draw delegation. XXXX has been most imposed,

others will be less imposed. The effective schools are invited to join.

It offers a way forward to schools in SCC, it is offered as a resource, other things will follow and it is a opportunity which may come only once

Different Heads need different things. We don't want them to shout at each other. They could be really comfortable and nice but that's not what the school needs. They don't even need to have high professional regard!

Q9 How have schools reacted to being part of a 'partnership?'

Mostly seen as a positive strategy, most know they have a problem. They may have reservations, but see the benefits.

Heads of the receiving schools are never going to like it, but they want to be seen in a positive light. It offers a line, another strategy, many have been tried already.

Governors are gradually reassured, some are slow to see it as an improvement strategy.

Q10. Is the 'partnership' seen as a two way process?

XXXXX will say that it is two way, that his staff are more aware, sharper, so they have benefited. As an LEA we are not so hothored about the two 'wayness'. We don't want a dependency culture, we are about disseminating good practice. There may be huge benefits for the 'donor' school, but we are not about V.good schools getting better

Q11. Is it seen by the LEA as a 'partnership of equals?'

Is it 'strengthening' or 'disempowering'?
Where is the pressure and support?

*Again it is a continuum and it depends on the twinning.
For some it could be disempowering, with some it is strengthening.
There should be some pressure from the donor school in some situations.
For others it is more support.*

- *Pressure firstly to go into the partnership*
- *Support for the process*
- *Challenge for the donor school*
- *Support at different levels.*

Q12 What do you see as the potential benefits or gains for both the schools and the LEA?
What do you expect to see happening?

*Improvement in Quality across a wider bunch of schools than we would have the capacity to deal with.
In the LEA most of what is know about school improvement is in the schools
Developing the profession, across SMT, MMgt developing these groups has enormous benefits.*

Q13. Who leads or drives the partnership?

*The LEA has driven the set up of the partnerships and ideally the schools take it on....but if it was left to some they wouldn't do much.
We haven't the capacity to do it. We involved XXXXXXXXXX (not an officer) but he will be better at picking up on the negative stuff.*

Q14. What is the role of the LEA in managing the process?

*It is an intervention, the LEA make it happen, get it going.....and then monitor through the SLA.
XXXXX Transformation is a more complicated picture.*

Q15. What strengths and weaknesses have already emerged from the strategy?

One of the problems is the LEAs ability to keep track, and capacity to make it happen quickly enough. Longer term is the evaluation of what is happening.

*There may not have been enough done to bring everyone together, we could learn more collectively if we had more time.
Not enough time to develop the vision with the LEA*

From the SDA point of view, XX will never leave his inspectorial role, XX will do it well, XX has a more systematic approach

There is a capacity and capability issue amongst the Advisory staff, and the question of what skill set the SDA needs to do this work. There is an issue with the challenge of the SDA.

Q16 Is this in any way a simple solution to a complex problem?

Why are some SCC not in a partnership?

Some schools are not in it because they don't have an appropriate neighbour, or other strategies are needed. Most intensive schools need multiple support.

It will seem a simple solution only if we don't want it to work and concern that only bits are happening. It needs to move quickly, but it also needs a gestation period. It takes 6 months to set it up...some take longer. 18 months for some difference to be noted.....not a simple solution and not a quick fix.

Pace is an LEA issue, schools pace is also an issue. It is not the only solution it actually needs a variety of things, particularly for the most extreme situations.

Appendix 2

Interview: Headteacher effective school

Interview with ...Head of AquariusPartnership Strategy Effective School...Term 1...Date 16/07/02

Q1 Why has your school become involved in a partnership as a strategy for improvement? Who has driven the idea? .

Where has the belief come from?

What do you believe about 'transferability'?

What do you think about it all personally?

It originally started when XX asked if HTs were willing to work with other schools. I would have liked a secondment, but maybe that was not appropriate as I had already been out a lot and the SMT was changing again. So I looked at working with schools, if not running it –then at least working with and supporting. Not empire building, not glory hunting, but I wanted to see if it was what I wanted to do. There is a belief in making a difference for pupils. As a 11+ failure and coming from a working class background all leads to having a feel for education and how critical education is and that it makes a difference. Give other schools the opportunities that are here, wanting to work with, not unilaterally doing it and also knowing that this school would run if I wasn't here. I trust everyone to get on with what needs to be done. In this school we talk, we don't blame, we take responsibility. Time was right here for a change. There was then a huge gap between saying yes and anything actually happening. Then there was some talk about another school, all to be kept quiet, I can understand the reasons for this. Then XX said XXX. I was interested, it is a distance away, (important that it is not on the doorstep!) I already knew the HT through induction programme. I had also worked in XXXXXXXX and knew something about the Island. Children are different below the AXXX. I wasn't sure about what the LEA had in mind or the issues at XXX. Other schools were more obviously in difficulties, it was all more public. XXX was not one for big issues, the LEA had picked it up, XX fed through the Alerts Information. With all that in mind we started to talk about a partnership. I have enjoyed it, and if it keeps the school head above water, that's OK-----along with others. They didn't want me to run the school and I was pleased about that.

Q2. Who decides on the Partnerships? How are they put together?

Is there a contract?

No contract, all verbally agreed. There are documents, but they have evolved. They are not prescriptive. The Advisory DH working there was significant. She played a dual role. I gave some relief from the LEA as an external Head, they might talk to me about her.

There were meetings with the HT and XX, all very polite, it is more of a support model. At was very direct, XX had done a PIC, and this had highlighted the issues. XX knew the issues had to be taken up. Although XX was direct it was done quite subtly done.... All this was new to me. It was not just a HT coming in and working with the Head alone, one HT alone could not have an impact and also run their own school. A HT couldn't work at a distance and run their own school. We talked about different levers. We talked about me working with XXXX (acting HT) and the DHs. Here my own SMT were curious, suspicious that I was leaving. It became more about SMTs working with SMTs. It was good for them to pal up and work together. Lots of interest was shown from my staff here

Q3. How were you identified as being a suitable partner?

How did you feel about being asked?

I was pleased to be asked. We were doing well for 11/12 years. We are now over subscribed, results are going up. We are doing well. We are fully staffed, we have avoided the elephant pits. We share and talk things through. Plus we could learn from them. It had to be two way and we had to build the trusting environment. We gave them the chance to visit, no patronising, no judgements. All information was given free, in confidence when required. Anything asked for was given. My SMT went down to XXXXXX, and all of their SMT have come up here. Looked at all sorts of things eg SEN, Curric design, attendance data. I have met with Robin and have said I will be there for him. I have now met with XXXX (new HT)

Q4. What do you think were the key factors in your school becoming an 'effective school'?

I have confidence in this school, esp. the SMT (although not fully consistent) we have turned the corner. We will never compete with the Grammar Schools and the selective RC school, we are at the lower end, but we have changed it and parents now see it too. We have ploughed resources and money into the staff. The workforce here is close to 30% support staff, so teachers can concentrate on T&L and SCITT.

Q5. What are the particular indicators of the effective school that makes it suitable as a partner?

We are not a lick super school, we don't do lots of awards. We are not a Beacon, but we should be given it by the LEA. All pupils do 10 GCSEs and it is an open access 6th Form.

I am that sort of a person, we have something to offer. Promotion from here has been good. Staff are very caring and they are our greatest resource. I have sought to give them everything they need in terms of support.

Q6. What are the essential qualities for effect an effective partnership

There needs to be trust between the schools, and the school should not be too prescriptive. Goals yes, but not strict performance targets. They are under pressure if you do that. We are something of an Oasis, somewhere to come to talk. Somewhere safe.

Here they can see other systems and see that things maybe are not as bad as they may think. We don't want to demoralise. I have been able to be quite direct with the acting HT. With the new HT it will be a new situation,

Q.7 Is partnership another form of Mentoring or Coaching?

Yes, staff at XXXXXX have in the main more experience and therefore the mentoring/coaching role has been there. It is not overt.

They have a lot of experience as well.

Q.8 To what extent is the 'partnerships' imposed on you? Did you feel you could say no!
Do you believe it will work?

I never really thought of it that way.

Always saw it as something positive

I did get questioned by the Govs , but most thought that if I was leading it, the opportunities would be good. I believe it will work, but it is now in a new phase with the new HT, it depends how much she wants it to work. Some of the staff there never come out of the school to see things differently in another school

Q.9 How has the school reacted to being part of a 'partnership?'(Staff, Govs, Parents??)
Is it high/low profile?

This has been done very quietly, no 'big brother' I didn't want staff here to think they were a failing school, but a school in need of support. We can help them and their children as fellow professionals.

SMT here thought it was my way out, staff generally saw it as a positive thing.

Govs were OK about it, but the parents have not been told.

I am concerned that things need to be changed, and it is not my role to tell them. It is my role to boost confidence, make contacts, raise morale. It needs to be driven from within and also be part of the new heads agenda.

Q10. Is the 'partnership' seen as a two way process?

Yes, but they accept that XX has the breathing space. At Acting HT level, XXXXX was really new into it, and needed a lot of help and advice

Q11. Do you see it as a 'partnership of equals'?

Is it 'strengthening' or 'dis-empowering' for the SCC?

Where is the pressure and support?

Yes it is a partnership of equals

You need to be careful to strengthen and not dis-empower. I don't draw judgements. It is very much working with. That's the beginning of real intervention support work. I needed to explain all of this to my staff. I don't control the visits.

In terms of pressure and support, I see us as a pressure release valve. The pressure comes from others, LEA, Ofsted.

Q12 What do you see as the potential benefits or gains for both the schools and the LEA?

What is happening, and what do you expect to see happening?

Are the right issues being addressed?

Some of this has been covered before, and the areas they want to address have been identified now, but there are difficulties. The situation is winnable, we need different levels of support.

We are helping the LEA to put the school above the line. We want the pupils of Essex to get a good deal. The LEA could never spot the difficulties during 3 visits per year, particularly when the school didn't stand out.

The school needs a critical friend, one who can ask the right questions.

Q13. Who leads or drives the partnership?

I keep my eye on it and have kept it going along. I talk to the DH there and get feedback on what is going on. Once per month I meet with XXXXX when he comes up to XX

I feel responsible for the partnership, I am the most senior partner. I am the one who phones up etc. I meet with the SMT and let them unload what they are facing. It is a nice school, but it needs to tighten up. XX has been instrumental, she is a spy in the camp.

Q14. What is the role of the LEA in managing the process?

*The LEA is there as a broker, providing the finance and holding others to account
To keep involved through key people like XX*

Q15. What strengths and weaknesses have already emerged from the strategy?

There are lots of strengths.

A weakness would be to try to be too prescriptive.

If they don't do it you can advise, but you cannot make them do it.

Is that the role of the LEA?

Here the monitoring role is useful, make sure the funding is used for the best use.

It needs to be sustainable, not just telling them what to do.

I have not got the full measure of the new HIT yet, will she ask me what to do, or will it be her plan?

Q16 Is this in any way a simple solution to a complex problem?

It is one facet of the problem, there are other players, LEA, SDAs, ASTs all working alongside

It has a lot to do with relationships and confidence.

(try to compare with DfES Partnerships for improvement)

Appendix 3

Interview: Headteacher School Causing Concern

Interview with...Head of Virgo School	Term 2	Date 3/12/02.....
<p>1.How has the partnership developed since our last meeting?</p> <p>Is there a plan or any other documentation?</p> <p><i>Its really positive, people here are accessing at SW things that they couldn't experience elsewhere. They are really becoming part of it.</i></p> <p><i>I can tell staff what it was like at my old school, but this way they can go and find out. That's better than me telling them what it was like.</i></p> <p><i>All done in a non threatening way</i></p>		
<p>2.Who else have been involved?</p> <p><i>Newly appointed HOY7 has been over to XX looking at Transition project Yr6-7. She is energised and developing a Sec/primary HT meeting. She was able to be at a conference there and got right into it.</i></p> <p><i>We did a science teacher exchange for a week, and we may do the same again for Languages, but there is no point forcing it. Another possibility is the GTP, XXXXX needs another environment for his training, but the Maths dept wasn't keen on it so we went for the female PE teacher instead</i></p> <p><i>Job shadowing, XXXXXX will shadow XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX</i></p> <p><i>Head of D&T will visit SW (Tech there is very good) He is apprehensive about bringing Home EC and D&T, both will go XXXXX XXXXXXXX (senior manager) from XXXXXXXXX will work with XXXX XXXXX from XX ; they will manage it on into the future.</i></p> <p><i>Finance/bursar have met to exchange ideas and practices.</i></p>		
<p>3.What benefits for either school?</p> <p>Has anything transferred?</p> <p><i>Some research in the form of pupil pursuits. Concerned about Big Brother watching, but protected staff at XXXXX it wasn't reciprocal. Also the personalities of the staff involved is critical.</i></p>		

I have called in some favours in moving things forward, and there is the money involved. (£40 K here, twice that at other partnership schools)

As a new HT I have been able to talk it through with staff in the first term and have been able to make the best of the opportunity.

There has been some good spin offs. I have been able to use partnership money to sure up some staffing issues. Good maths teacher was part time but wanted to be full time, I could release time for others to work on Partnership and I got her a full time post!

4. Have things developed as you would have liked?

If not why not?

Things are going well, I am happier than before. I have no problems at all about the partnership. Most/all in the school have been able to see the benefits. Some aspects still need to be explained.

5. What lessons have been learned?

You must get the right people otherwise it will not work.

You need to be very clear what your expectations are from the partnership work.

After the teacher expectation, the teachers were supposed to write it up together, but the SW teacher wrote it all up on his own!!

You need to be precise.

6. Have you any more thoughts on the essential qualities needed for a successful partnership?

Trust, flexibility to get the right things going.

Giving those managing it the time to do it properly. No good if it is just something else that someone else has to do!

XXXX was slow to get back to XX, but he has a lot to do here.

The LIG may give us the opportunity to employ someone to run the whole thing!

7. If more people now know that there is a partnership, how do they react to being in the partnership?

Any effect on staff morale?

Any contributions to CPD?

Professional development has been rejuvenated.

XXXX feels far more buoyant, he is learning new ways from having a new HT

8. What evidence is there of the partnership being a two way process?

The science exchange was two way

Some still in planning

Learning support and dyslexia, working together, both are good anyway, but both are benefiting from working together.

There are always practical difficulties, you cannot always assume the other school can jump to give support!! They have their own difficulties, crises and agendas.

9. Who has driven the partnership thus far?

I have driven it , its been very useful for S4

We decide what to do, We are not now doing the joint training in Jan. They are condensing KS3 to two years, but we are not doing that

10. What part has the LEA played in the process of Partnership building since our last meeting?

XXXXX has helped XX construct a plan and detailed the engagement.

I have constructed it, I like it. Calculating the % of the money both schools has.

11. Have any strengths or weaknesses emerged since our last meeting?

Plenty of strengths already outlined

12. Are you still pleased to be in the partnership?

Yes really good.

Appendix 4

Email conversations:

School Link Advisers

SLA 4: The Libra-Taurus Partnership and The Pisces Scorpio Partnership

From: Dave xxxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 14th May 2002 21:16
To: xxxxxxxxxx LSA AIS LS
Subject Re: Secondary partnerships

Hi xxxxxx, I am interested in these two partnerships. As you say it is just off the press. Do you know how xxxxxxxxx was identified as a partner for xxxxxx?

From: xxxxxxxxxx LSA AIS LS
Sent: 15th May 2002 09:06
To: Dave xxxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject Re: Secondary partnerships

Nope have not a clue. Xxxx organised it initially early days so far not sure if xxxxx has come up with a programme that is mutually agreeable to both schools. The Head seemed a bit reluctant to talk about it and seems to put more faith in her specialist school partnership but neither have come up with anything tangible that is having an impact. Some further details are emerging about the other pairing but I don't think xxxx knows a great deal more than the initial discussion that was instigated between the two heads but I was not a part. I'll keep you posted.

From: Dave xxxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 15th May 2002 11:26
To: xxxxxxxxxx LSA AIS LS
Subject Re: Secondary partnerships

Thanks, can you tell me more about the xxxxxxxx partnership? Where you involved at all?

From: xxxxxxxxxx LSA AIS LS
Sent: 15th May 2002 : 21:36
To: Dave xxxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject Re: Secondary partnerships

Unclear on this one as xxxx did the initial setting up. Low key at the present; not much happening; impact minimal need to do more on this with schools once this week is out of the way. HMI in there next week. School has this other link with the Specialist School but not clear what they hope to gain from this. It seems a bit hap hazard!

The link you might be more interested in is between xxxxxx and xxxxxxx. The initial meeting took place last Friday pm. I wasn't involved at all, but it looks like they are moving to joint working at KS3 which they are both interested in; they are talking about teacher recruitment to the consortium with staff working in two schools to relieve the pressure. I am looking to set up a second twinning meeting with the two heads on Friday at the post 16 conference, if they are both there.

From: Dave xxxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 16th May 2002 14:35
To: xxxxxxxxx
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Hi xxxxxxxx,

Thanks for your comments. What do you think about this overall strategy of linking these schools in a partnership?
Do you think it will help them improve?

From: xxxxxxxx LS AAIS LS
Sent: 19th May 2002 18:41
To: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Have not seen one that works yet!!! Not in this county. Too much baggage and mistrust. Why are they doing it? What's in it for me and them!!?

From: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 25th November 2002 20:13
To: xxxxxxxx
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

I spoke today to xxxxxxx. The heads have been in touch by phone about putting some activities together to justify the funding. My feeling is that this is lip service to the idea of partnership and this one is fairly dead in the water. Xxxx says he will respond positively to her request for Maths and general Curriculum support. His response is like hers, luke warm. We need to monitor it but my feeling is that does not give value for money nor does it justify continued funding for next year, unless there is a dramatic turn around or a new partner for xxxxxx School.

From: xxxxxxxx LS AAIS LS
Sent: 25th November 2002 20:55
To: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Agreed.

There seems a clear issue of lack of commitment on this. The question we need to face up to- is the schools SMT up to the challenge of getting the school to move forward?

They have been on a recruitment drive.....first time that has happened! Apparently it was successful and more parents seem to have been prepared to sign up to sending pupils but there is an over all casual approach to moving the school forward and a lack of clear focus and drive to address the issues. This seems to be a greater issue to be over come than the partnership. The school appears swamped by the enormity of the task. There is not a clear steer; staff appear committed but they do not know how or in which direction to turn hence they try everything on offer without clear evaluation; there does not appear to be any sense of urgency.

SLA (2) The Cancer- Aquarius Partnership

From: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 13th May 2002 21:35
To: xxxxxxxx
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Hi XXXX,

I have contacted the two schools today and will begin my visits in the summer. In the meantime can we have an email conversation and your involvement?

What is or has been your involvement in the partnership? How did you find out about it?

From: xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 14th May 2002 09:25
To: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Answers in order of asking the questions, 'Nil' and 'By accident' !!! To be fair xxxx asked me to raise the principle of twinning last September, but it was taken over completely after that and I have had not direct involvement at all. I did receive notes of meetings eventually.

From: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 15th May 2002 21:16
To: xxxxxxxx
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Thanks, do you know how the schools were twinned and what make xxxxxx a worthy partner? Are you going to drive it??

From: xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 16th May 2002 09:29
To: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Sorry, no, no and not as far as I know! And this time I cannot qualify it positively. I did offer to take it over but a meeting was arranged, I couldn't attend, they were not willing to change the date....so I wait and see. Everyone is attending the CSM next week.

SLA (3) The Aries –Gemini Partnership

From: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 13th May 2002 21:35
To: xxxxxxxx
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Have you found out anything more about the partnership? Where you involved in setting it up and do you know how it started? This is the start of the email conversation I spoke about.

From: xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 14th May 2002 09:00
To: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject: Re: Sec. Partnerships

Rang yesterday to chase up a XX's report but no news on partnership. This is definitely a Principal Adviser led activity in the setting up stage. Not involved in any discussions or decisions but I understand there are plans for staff training, GTPs, attendance and the chance for the head to talk to a head outside his local area.

From: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 16th May 2002 14:35
To: xxxxxxxx
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Hi xxxx,

Thanks for your comments. You know more than most. What do you think about this overall strategy of linking these schools in a partnership?

Do you think it will help them improve?

From: xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 17th May 2002 14:47
To: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject: Re: Sec. Partnerships

Think these are going to work best where the weaker school is receptive to the idea and feels it is equally responsible for driving the project with their partner school. Schools who value development in the widest sense are I suspect going to get the most out of it. In a sense like any initiative eg NOF, the school has to value the activity to ensure it moves forward. Level of commitment and drive of head will be important factors.

Thinking about your other questions, we could track developments at the CDM in autumn, would make for some joined up thinking and maybe something more about an LEA exit strategy. A thought!

SLA (1) The Virgo-Leo partnership and The Capricorn-Sagittarius Partnership

From: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 13th May 2002 21:35
To: xxxxxxxx
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

I was surprised to see how many of your schools are involved in these partnerships. I have contacted most and will start my visiting in the summer term. In the meantime can we start our email conversation. Have you been involved in setting them up? How will you manage so many schools?

From: xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 19th May 2002 18:06
To: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject: Re: Sec. Partnerships

I have had limited contact in setting these up and have had no contact with XXXXXX school at all; that was set up by XXXX by really led by XXXX the Head of XXX. XXXXX has been asked to liase with that one so I won't be involved. The next job is to align the twinning plan with the recover plan. I have had more contact with this one and the deputies have worked on a plan, the head isn't really interested. There is again an issue here of aligning the LEA support plan with the twinning plan to avoid double funding.

From: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 20th May 2002 09:42
To: xxxxxxxx
Subject: Re: Secondary Partnerships

Thanks xxxx, that's very helpful. I'm interested in the twinning plan and the support plan alignment, can you say a little more.

Can you also give me a little more information on the work of the two deputies especially as one is leaving and the other is part-time.

From: xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Sent: 5th June 2002 13:03
To: Dave xxxxxxxx SASD AIS LS
Subject: Re: Sec. Partnerships

The deputies are aligning the plans, but not sure how far they has got. The issue as I see it is convincing the schools to use the twinning money to buy back LEA services that they saw as free through the support plan. There is also an issue about ownership, with the support plan we can be reasonably assertive in what it contains, twinning arrangements are perhaps less easy to oversee as they are led by the 'good' school.

The 2 deputies did most of the plan, but xxxxxx did most of the work. The head has not been enthusiastic about twinning at all when I last spoke to him he didn't seem to be aware of what the plan contained. I'm not sure if this is a common feature of the SCC feeling the arrangement is being forced on them? We do need guidelines and protocols for seting up twinings, as it has also arisen with specialist schools partnerships.

Appendix 5

Capricorn and Sagittarius: Twinning Development and Action Plan

Twinning with [REDACTED] High School and [REDACTED] High School

Introduction

- [REDACTED] has been twinned with [REDACTED] High School with the aim of sharing and developing good practice in the areas of curriculum development, staff development, student support and guidance.
- The intended outcomes have been the result of a needs analysis conducted by both schools and an action/development plan has been drawn up to ensure delivery of the intended outcomes.
- Twinning of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] is expected to play a vital role in raising standards in classrooms by sharing approaches to teaching and passing on expertise across the curriculum.
- The following action/development plan has been a joint development by key staff at the two schools and these members of staff will act as project co-ordinators.
- The staff, governors, SMT and SDA of both schools have actively supported the action/development plan.
- Total cost of the project to date is £19475. This leaves a carry forward from the £20000 allocated of £525.

Key Issue	To provide a link between both schools in order to benefit from each others expertise and other institutions
Objective	To investigate good practice from other schools initiatives

Target	Action	Time-Scale	Staff. Resp	Training needs	Costs & resources	Success criteria
To effectively mentor new Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supporting new headteacher ■ Sharing good practice ■ Developing new initiatives ■ Review progress on twinning action plan 	2002-2003	■■■■	Training for new Headteacher via mentoring	Headteacher mentoring 2x 3 hour sessions per term @ £150 Cost per headteacher £900 Total cost: £1800 for year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regular, planned meetings ■ Support provided as part of induction programme ■ Action plan implemented and evaluated
To devise and implement an action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■■■■■ to meet on a regular basis ■ Action plan drafted and implemented ■ Visits and training planned ■ Initiatives planned ■ Action plan communicated to HT, SMT and Governors of both schools ■ SDA to advise monitor and evaluate twinning plan 	January-September 2002	■■■■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Training activities developed ■ Visits to other schools ■ Information on new initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fast track teachers, • interactive teaching, • virtual action zones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supply costs for meeting time ■ 2@ £75 by 6 half day meetings ■ writing action plan 1/ day £150 purchase of 2 interactive whiteboards £5400 Total Cost £6450	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Action plan devised and implemented ■ Action plan meets the needs of priorities identified by SDA support plan ■ Twinning initiative evaluations are positive ■ Twinning initiative has real benefits for both schools

To increase knowledge and understanding of initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visits to a variety of institutions re-interactive whiteboards Virtual action zones New teaching and learning strategies ■ Sharing of good practice ■ Devise strategies for the future 	April 2002	■■■■ ■■■■	Other institutions provide information re-new initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Travel costs for 2 staff £30 ■ Cover for staff 2 days @ £150 =£300 <p>Total Cost £330</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Interchange of ideas ■ Action plan devised re introduction of new ideas ■ Action plan implemented within agreed timescale
To share good practice between ■■■■ and ■■■■ with regard to departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■■■■ and technology department to visit ■■■■ ■■■■ focus on: SOWs Academic tracking 	May 2002	■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■■■■ as ■■■■ AST to share good Practice re-SOWs, lesson planning, academic tracking, assessment, value added data, lesson observations, Leadership and management of the department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Travel costs for ■■■■ £30 ■ Reprographics re-materials £20 <p>Total Cost: £50</p>	SPT experience in new AST role ■■■■ technology department benefit from shared experiences. Effective planning, teaching and learning.
To effectively appoint and train academic tutors in both Institutions in order to implement a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■■■■ meet to define role and responsibilities of ■■■■ ■ Job descriptions for ■■■■ devised ■ Personal specifications devised ■ Interviews arranged 	June/July 2002	■■■■ ■■■■	Joint training of ■■■■ ■■■■ act as facilitator Training packs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel costs for staff £30 Cover costs for staff @ £150 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quality appointments made ■ Number of staff applying is positive ■ Effective training conducted ■ Clear focus for job identified

system of monitoring the academic progress of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and implemented ■ Training programme devised ■ Training for new [redacted] jointly implemented for both schools ■ [redacted] liaise with HOYs ■ Line management monitoring of [redacted] performance 				Total cost: £180	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Effective monitoring of performance in place ■ Students attainment A*-C increased by 5% ■ KS3 results improve by 5% ■ Career opportunities for staff identified ■ Retention of staff increased by 10%
Effectively train staff in both schools in positive behaviour management strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Training day on behaviour management organised for both schools ([redacted]) ■ Trainer: [redacted] ■ [redacted] organised ■ Lead in sessions planned /implemented ■ Follow up sessions planned / implemented ■ Evaluations completed 	October 2002	[redacted]	[redacted] Trainer [redacted] facilitate lead in sessions and follow up sessions. [redacted] to organise speaker and day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trainer: £200 ■ Refreshments: £100 ■ Transport: £100 ■ Reprographics: £20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Effective training implemented ■ Working in partnership with two schools ■ Interchange of ideas ■ Action plan devised and implemented on behaviour strategies ■ Behaviour of students improve by 10% in both schools
To share good practice in student related initiatives	Easter revision school at [redacted] and representatives from [redacted] Gifted and Talented	Easter 2002 Summer	[redacted] (N [redacted]) +reps [redacted]	[redacted] acts as facilitator for [redacted]	Travel £30 Time Materials £5.00	[redacted] adapt and implement [redacted] experience of summer schools and

	summer school	2002	() +Reps			presentations.
	Presentation Award evenings for years 7.8.9.and 10	Summer term 2002	() +Reps			
	Presentation evening for certificates	Autumn term 2002	() +Reps		Total cost: £35	

Appendix 6

Cancer and Aquarius: Partnership Activities

**PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES
SPRING 2003**

Activity	Time	Persons	Suggested Date
Final look at Curriculum Model. Costing the Curriculum using [redacted] spreadsheet.	1 day at [redacted] [redacted]	[redacted] [redacted]	Wednesday 15/01/03 10.00am – 3.00pm
Raising achievement at KS4 (programme planned for Year 10 Year 11)	1 day at [redacted] [redacted]	[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]	In early January
Developing a consistent format for all departmental documentation. (document formats produced)	½ day at [redacted] [redacted] – or somewhere in the middle!	[redacted] [redacted]	Friday 24/01/03 9.00am – 1.00pm
Support for [redacted] (graduate) from [redacted] [redacted]	2 days – needs to be pretty intensive	[redacted] [redacted]	Early in January if possible
Annual departmental review. - System and documentation	1 day – somewhere in the middle?	[redacted] [redacted]	Wednesday 29/01/03 9.00am – 3.00pm
Planning to meet the need of able pupils within the curriculum. (Action plan required)	½ day at [redacted] [redacted]	[redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]	In early February
Use of Interactive Whiteboard and ICT in Maths	2 x ½ days	[redacted] [redacted]	As soon as possible

management work time plus travel time / costs.

$$£20000 / £250 = 80 \text{ days}$$

Shared between [redacted] and [redacted] = 40 days joint work, or 40 days individual work each school.

The named contacts may use the allocated time for:

- Joint planning
- Individual planning / work
- Delegated time to other individuals/pairs of staff for specific developments

Named Contacts	Joint days			Used for (SIP)
	total	used	left	
[redacted] [redacted]	8	2	6	2.1: strategic planning
[redacted] [redacted]	10	2	8	3.2: attendance
				3.4c: rewards/sanctions
				2.3b: role of HuY/tutor
				3.4.a: SMSC / careers
[redacted] [redacted]	5	1	4	3.5: site management
				2.4: budget management
[redacted] [redacted]	10	3	7	1.2b,1.5: review data set
				1.3, 1.4: curriculum model
				1.1a/b: monitoring departments
				1.2b,1.5: assess/target setting/VA
				(inc challenge more able)
[redacted] [redacted]	3	1	2	1.1,1.2a: teaching & learning:
				observation, planning, delivery etc
				(inc challenge more able)
				3.1a: staff development plan
support governor ([redacted])	4	0	4	2.6: governor development
& reserve ([redacted])				
Total each school	40	9	31	

Additional support:

MFL	AST. Medium & short term planning (individual lessons, programmes of study), delivery of 4-part lesson. No of days to be confirmed.
PE	AST. 2 days?, focussed work on detailed planning to show differentiation
Maths	Lead maths teacher. 3 days?, focussed work with targeted members of staff on planning & delivery

Appendix 7

Cancer and Aquarius: Partnership Evaluation

EVALUATION OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CANCER SCHOOL AND THE AQUARIUS SCHOOL.

Emphasis was on the two SMTs working together, sharing ideas and developing processes at The Cancer School. Support has been advisory rather than direct involvement. Limitations on the project were made by the Cancer changing head teacher during the year, funding being ended after one year of the two year project and unforeseen events at The Cancer School. The partnership will continue with LIG funding. The emphasis will be on middle management level, particularly the pairing of departments to disseminate good practice and the exchange of staff in their first two years of teaching. Both schools are appointing partnership coordinators to implement work.

Raising Achievement

- Aquarius provided AST support for technology, MFL, science and PE.
- Curriculum Deputies organised exchanges of Schemes of Work, and Departmental Development Plans.
- Common framework for departmental review agreed.
- Cancer classrooms now display National Curriculum ladders of attainment
- Following a visit to The Aquarius School, staff at Cancer are reviewing rewards and sanctions
- Aquarius School helped Cancer complete the Behaviour Audit
- Aquarius supported Curriculum Review and helped improve the curriculum offer.
- No progress with primary liaison.

Too early to predict any improvement in achievement.

Management and Planning

- Head teachers met to discuss restructuring of SMT
- No progress with Ofsted preparation
- No progress with joint Governor training

Views from Cancer staff

The phrase 'at the Aquarius School' is a common one at The Cancer School. Staff engage in regular discussions and are keen to discuss improvement and see how things are done elsewhere. There is no sense of being done to by another school, but of working with professional colleagues to share good practice.

Appendix 8

The Cancer School: Improvement Plan 2002/3

School Improvement Plan Framework 2002-2003									
theme	issue	achieved through...	Lead	LEA plan	start	end	success criteria	monitoring	external resources
1. Raising Achievement	1. Improve the quality of teaching & learning	a. Extend T&L strategies	■■■■	N41,44,52 L14,23, L3	Sep 02	Jul 05	less incidents. KS3&4=mat perf	HT, govs pers, govs curric	winning(4): £4400 LEA: ASTs, sub review
		b. Monitoring of teaching & support for improved performance	■■■■	N52, L14, L3	Sep 02	july 03 & annually thereafter	KS3&4=mat perf targets No unsat teaching by July 03	HT, govs pers, govs curric	winning(1): £4400 LEA: ASTs, T&L prog. sub reviews
		c. Consistency between departments	■■■■	N52, L14, L3	Sep 02	Dec 03	sch lesson framewk. Std docs & plans	DHC, govs curric	winning(1): £4400(1): £930 LEA: man train
		d. NC levelling of standards	■■■■	N11	Dec 03	Jul 03	level ladders, marking	HT	win(2): 950 LEA team
		e. resourcing	■■■■		Sep 02	july 03 & annually	resources allocated by dept dev plan	HT, govs fin	none - redistribution
	2. Raising achievement of the more able	a. Extend T&L strategies	G&T	N25, L1, L2	Sep 02	Jul 05	5+A*-C in PANDA upper quartile	DHC	winning(1): £4400 LEA: ASTs, sub rev
		b. Target setting & value added framework	■■■■	L23	Dec 02	Jul 04	framewk in place. KS3&4=mat perf	HT, govs curric	LEA: advice&support
		c. Raising teacher expectations	■■■■ HoDs		Sep 02	Jul 05	KS3&4=mat perf	DHC, HT	
		d. Curricular enrichment activities	■■■■	L22to24	Apr 03	sept 04 & annually	every dept has activities 5 clubs daily	HT, govs curric	
	3. Pupils are supported and challenged in their learning	a. SEN review	SENCO	N2	Sep 02	Jul 03	plan in place. Reduce excln, KS3&4=mat perf	DHP, govs curric	LEA: 5 EP sessions. PRU tutor
		b. inclusion review, inc curricular alternatives	SENCO	N31,32,33 N41,43,45	Sep 02	Sep 04	imp attend, exclns down 10%, 100% 1+A-G	HT, full govs	winning(6): £600 LEA: PRU tutor
		c. support/policies for underachieving groups	SENCO	N41,44,46	Jan 05	Sept 03 & annually	-opp/stricness pols. Data shows imp perf	HT, govs curric, govs ?	winning(6): £800
	4. Curriculum model meets the needs of all	a. review KS3	■■■■	N2	Sep 02	Sep 03	model=need & NC	HT, govs curric	
		b. review KS4	■■■■	N3	Sep 02	Sep 03	model=need & NC	HT, govs curric	winning(3): £3600
		c. KS3 strategy	KS3 man	N22	Sep 02	Sep 03	coord, plan, achieve	DHC, HT, govs	LEA: num/fin support
		d. Review 6th form provision	SMT	N35	Sep 02	Nov 02	implement sept 03	govs curric	
		e. PSHE & citizenship	■■■■		Apr 02	Sep 03	time & SoW=mat req	HT, govs curric	
		f. audit curriculum to ensure efficiency & effectiveness	■■■■	N31,32	Oct 02	Apr 03	KS3&4=mat perf Teach satisfactn / retention	HT, govs curric	
	5. Assessment & progression	a. Assessment review: value added, termly assesment & target setting	■■■■	N41,42,46	Dec 02	Jul 04	new policy/procedures inplace. KS3&4=mat perf	HT, govs curric	LEA: advice&support
		b. KS2/3 continuity/program	■■■■	N21,22	Sep 02	Sep 03	prim liaison strat	HT, govs curric	winning(7): £1600

SIP	What needs doing	what is doing	What external support requested		
			twinning (200000)	Cross Directorate	other
1.1	Improve quality of teaching	Training programme on T&L - twilights? & INSET day. Observe all/underperf staff by Jan, points for action, follow up spring. Standard lesson plan/obs sheets, lesson framework. Issue - quality of follow up work.	ASTs: PE, Science, Maths, MFL, Technology (), Paired work: curriculum costing. This year/next year	T&L programme fell flat - leave it. Someone in, 3 weeks, to do all observation	AST: Technology, via ()
1.2	Achievement	KS4 target grp & coordinator for improving GCSEs. Want study clubs, Masterclasses: on SMT role. Will write into dir time Sept	coord & () meet. Deps pairing		
	More able / 5+A*-C	Able pupils - coordinator. Programme focuses on 'fun activities' outside the curriculum - needs to move to curric delivery, focused extension work, clubs.	1 day paired work - didn't happen, our fault	See examples of good practice with 'gifted & talented' pupils / KS4 GCSE improvement work in another school?	
1.3	Enhance SEN provision	rooming. 'wish list'. Review teaching commitment. Catch ups/ progress units / SEN supt on TT Sept '03. New policy? - new procedures. Training twilights. Tutors do IEPs. Funding / staffing clarity	() & () meet () ()? What purpose?	5 Additional EP sessions - use to 'catch up' with exam dispensn etc, not developmental. Twilight training - beh management. Forget training on indiv learning styles. No sign of home sch link worker, PRU in ben policy / reward scheme? RR time? SENAPS - joint planning (how about joint doing?)	someone to - train (tutors to conduct IEP reviews (1x/twilight). Training prog for LSAs
1.1	Improve consistency & quality between depts	need to follow up dept reviews, look at documentation, annual 'dept review' (can we have another INSET day, summer?). Find a citizenship/PSHE coord, careers.	liaison bt depts as & when required (need to agree how we do this). ASTs - MFL, Tech. Poor Ting in - sci, maths, tech, ICT, MFL - need targeted support	Version of middle manager training - problems with finding time	E1300 Departmental reviews. Review ICT spring (not sci). OFSTED self-eval course (2.1) - poss 12.11, 5.12, 9.1
1.5	assessment for learning / target setting / VA	continue as is for one cycle, till know what happens. Lots of activity, no impact	Next year - advice on reviewing		
1.2	line management / monitoring				

Appendix 9

Virgo and Leo: Partnership Agreement

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT: [REDACTED] HIGH SCHOOL AND [REDACTED] HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction

- The Governors of [REDACTED] have approved in principle a move towards close collaboration with [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] Head of [REDACTED], acting as consultant to Governors and the LEA, has been asked to produce an initial draft of an approach towards an agreement.
- The agreement should preserve the integrity and autonomy of the two schools, permitting them to maintain and further develop their distinctive characters.
- Collaboration is proposed at three levels:
 - Governor
 - Senior Management
 - Middle Management
- The agreement should be to the benefit of both schools and therefore address the perceived needs of both.

The Needs of [REDACTED]

Evidence sources, i.e. the consultant's own perceptions, the LEA review of (some) teaching and the LEA's conclusions from performance data suggest the following – short and long-term.

- To ameliorate the professional isolation of some [REDACTED] staff
- To help overcome other ill-effects of [REDACTED] small size, accessing some of the systems and policies of [REDACTED] particularly for new developments.
- To influence staff culture in terms of pupils' potential achievement, especially the third quartile of ability.
- To enhance strength and clarity of purpose in senior management and support professional development.
- To convince OFSTED that the school is headed in the right direction
- To confront local competition
- To plan for eventual Specialist School status
- To raise the proportion of good or better teaching
- To ensure that pupil performance is commensurate with prior attainment

The Needs of [REDACTED]

The [REDACTED] Strategic Plan, recently updated, includes the following targets:

- To further develop partnerships with other educational establishments
- To establish the school as a major hub for networks at the leading edge of education
- To further expand post-16 provision at the school

The Basis for Collaboration

The separate and distinctive characteristics of the schools should be preserved, and it could be beneficial if [REDACTED] in its move towards Specialist School status, adopted a different specialism ([REDACTED] is a Technology College).

It will be important to preserve the existing strengths of [REDACTED] particularly its excellent support for children with learning difficulties, Maths/Science and ICT.

- [REDACTED] should be enabled to access the strengths of [REDACTED]
 - High expectations in relation to pupil achievement
 - A staff culture which supports the above
 - Policies in the area of curriculum and teaching & learning
 - Schemes of work and learning resources
 - Professional development
- [REDACTED] should be enabled to access the strengths of MHS, to which there is reference above.
- Existing post-16 links might eventually be developed so that increasingly MHS can be presented as an 11-18 school.

Collaborative Activity

As indicated above, this should develop at three levels:

Subject Team Level

[REDACTED] operates through Curriculum Areas, the most relevant of which are English, Maths, Science, Modern Foreign Languages, Humanities, Expressive Arts, Technology and Special Needs. Each of these is managed by a Collegiate team, which generally comprises an Area Co-ordinator plus two other experienced colleagues who might, for example, be responsible for a Key Stage or a subject within an Area, e.g. History within Humanities.

In the first year of the partnership, there should be liaison between 3 or 4 curriculum areas. A member of each curriculum area in each school should be identified as responsible for liaison with their counterpart to plan collaborative activity. It is envisaged that this activity would consist of joint calendared meetings of the curriculum areas once per half term. These would be designated as teaching and learning/training meetings for the purpose of identifying and sharing best practice.

Two main foci are envisaged for the first year: Literacy and ICT.

It is proposed that the activity start in September with the Literacy focus and a collaboration in this respect between the two schools' English and Humanities Areas. In the spring term, it is envisaged that the model should be applied to ICT and two more departments.

Senior Management Level

It would also be beneficial if whole-school or cross-curricular policies relating to teaching and learning could be shared. This would require identified members of senior management to be "twinned" and their roles should also involve managing the collaborative activity referred to above in subject teams.

Governor Level

A Joint Governor Committee is referred to elsewhere in this paper.

Post-16

Building on current arrangements whereby Year 11 students are given particular support in considering opportunities in the Sixth Form, it is proposed that a member of the staff should at some stage join the Sixth Form management team, should act as tutor for students who have moved to SWCHS and should undertake some Sixth Form teaching at (for which services would be paid). In the longer term, this post could develop into the directorship of post-16 study at with a target date agreed (perhaps 2007 or 2008) for the establishment of some Sixth Form provision on the site. Although not regarded as an immediate priority for the school, its perceived benefits to recruitment and retention of high quality staff are considerable. It is proposed that this idea be considered and developed by the leadership of during the academic year 2002-03.

Management

There should be a range of issues over which management in the two schools could benefit from each other's expertise. A good example of this might be support for a move towards Specialist School status. Doubtless there will be other matters, related to the management of change and the introduction of new initiatives, where collaboration would be of mutual benefit.

Organisational Structure

For the proposals set out above to succeed in their objectives, there will need to be commitment at all levels in both schools.

This could be facilitated by the establishment of a Joint Governor Committee, labelled either "Curriculum" or "Teaching & Learning" which included a representative of the Local Education Authority. This might meet termly at most, and fulfil the role of "Governing Body" for the collaborative agreement. This committee would receive reports on a regular basis from the management committee suggested below. This should not be over burdensome, and would consist of a governor from each school, the two Heads and, School Development Advisor, in his role of supporting the school and monitoring it out of the "cause for concern" category.

The management committee would consist of the two Heads and the two senior managers, with responsibility for making the collaborative agreement work. Its brief would include planning activity in support of the agreement, monitoring its

implementation, evaluating the outcomes and reporting to the Governor Committee referred to above.

At subject team level, collaborative activity would be integrated into the work of collegiate teams already in place at [REDACTED] including some meetings of these teams and, more importantly, one to one mutual support on the part of staff given particular responsibility in this field who would be accountable to the appropriate senior manager for the successful prosecution of collaboration in the subject area.

Resources

It is understood that the Local Authority will make the sum of £45,000 available to the partnership during the financial year 2002-03 and that (subject only to DFES Standards Fund allocations) this level of support will continue for at least two further years.

Summary

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that this approach to collaboration needs to be fully "owned" in each school, and it would be a key responsibility of governors and senior managers to ensure that the necessary commitment was established and maintained.

Appendix 1: Resources

The main cost involved will inevitably be staff time, and an approach is set out below which makes assumptions about the amount of time that would need to be devoted to the partnership and an approximate cost set against it.

RESOURCES	ANNUAL COST (Sept. 02-Aug. 03)
Senior management meetings (10 per annum). 4 participants; 12 days work	£5,000
Senior Management informal liaison: 10 days work	£3,500
Middle management liaison/sharing: - meetings and one-to-one - 8 Areas of the curriculum; 16 staff; 5% of their time	£32,000
Other consultancy: - From [REDACTED] staff - From LEA	£8,000 £8,000
Travel	£3,500
Overall compensation to [REDACTED] for lead role in Partnership	£10,000
TOTAL:	£70,000

- Cost to increase by 4% 03-04 and by a further 4% 04-05 in line with rising pay costs.
- [REDACTED] to receive the £70,000 via monthly instalments and to fund reclaims from [REDACTED] High School.
- If [REDACTED] were to be awarded Beacon School status or Advanced Specialist School status, there would be a very significant reduction in the cost to the Local Education Authority.

APPENDIX 2: DRAFT PLAN FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY [REDACTED] - 3 years (subject to renewal)
September 2002-July 2005

Issue	Focus	Timing	Staff	Activity	Resources	Success criteria
Self evaluation & accountability	Establishment of robust systems for monitoring teaching & learning	From Jan 03	Senior Mgt. in both schools	Joint planning submission of draft system to governors; joint committee by May 03	Mainly staff costs – see resources plan	Agreed system fully operational September 2003
Improving the overall quality of teaching & learning	Sharing approaches towards teaching excellence – injecting pace and challenge	From Sept 02	Designated collegiate staff [REDACTED] counterpart	Implementation of mutual support systems at [REDACTED] Reporting to Senior Mgt. and governors	Ditto	60% of lessons "good or better" by July 04 100% "satisfactory or better" during OFSTED inspection
Able students	Developing a gifted & talented programme	From April 2003	G & T Co-ordinator at [REDACTED] Counterpart at [REDACTED]	Agree policy and implement at [REDACTED] by Sept. 04	Ditto	Impact on recruitment at MHS
Literacy	Developing whole-school approaches	Ongoing for July 04	AST from [REDACTED] LEA support	Further analysis of standards at [REDACTED] Plan agreed and submitted to Governors by May 2003	Ditto	Measurable improvement in Literacy standards at [REDACTED] and consequent improvement in exam results at KS3 by 03 and KS4 by 05
Assessment	Sharing practice	From April 03	Senior managers	Develop in light of audit of best practice	Ditto	Appropriate changes implemented
Management	Sharing best practice Mutual support	From Sept 02	Senior & middle mgt.	Develop in light of audit of best practice	Ditto	OFSTED convinced that management practice adequate to eliminate weaknesses at [REDACTED]
Student Support	Supporting students who might otherwise fail to reach their potential	From Jan 03	Senior Mgt	Investigate approaches. Implement as appropriate	Ditto	Discernible impact on achievement
Professional Devt.	Joint training activity	From Jan 03	All teaching staff	Some joint training days. Some "remission time" – twilight activity. Some staff exchanges	Ditto	Seen as supporting the above success criteria
Post-16 <u>Short-term</u>	[REDACTED] ownership of post-16 provision at [REDACTED] Use by [REDACTED] in marketing	From Sept. 02 or Jan. 03	[REDACTED] 6 th form Tutor [REDACTED] Dir. of Sixth	Liaison, tutoring and recruiting	Staffing not costed to partnership; travel expenses only.	Growing sense at [REDACTED] of being part of an 11-18 school. Positive impact on recruitment to [REDACTED] at 11 and [REDACTED] at 16.
	<u>Long term</u> Plan for Sixth Form provision on [REDACTED] site from 07 or 08	From 05	Partnership mgt. [REDACTED] Dir. Of 6 th ; [REDACTED] 6 th form Tutor	Develop plan	No cost to partnership	Viable courses operational from 08 at the latest.

Appendix 10

Virgo and Leo:

Joint Senior Management Meetings

PARTNERSHIP.

Joint Senior Management meeting (Friday 13.9.02)

Minutes:

Present: [REDACTED]

Joint Literacy Initiative between English and Humanities Departments:

Staff from the curriculum areas involved would meet for a twilight session on 30th September at [REDACTED]

There would be a whole group introductory session lead by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (Head of English) from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (Literacy Coordinator) [REDACTED]. This would be followed by curriculum area meetings.

Detailed planning for this meeting to take place on 24.9.02 at [REDACTED] with:

Other Initiatives:

- [REDACTED] Head of CDT at [REDACTED] to visit [REDACTED] to observe work of CDT /Technology curriculum areas.
- [REDACTED] Head of Year 7 at [REDACTED] to liaise with [REDACTED] re cross-phase tracking and Primary/Secondary conferences.
- Teacher exchanges with one exchange taking place each term.

Beginning with a Science exchange in the Autumn term, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Exchange to take place w.b 4.11.02.

3 half days required by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to plan. (extra payments of 400 pounds each in recognition of additional planning workload). Both teachers to deliver a report following the exchange.

- [REDACTED] Head of RE at [REDACTED] and other staff to visit [REDACTED] to look at aspects of departmental organisation.
- To develop cross-school departmental monitoring.
- To investigate ways of SMT Job Shadowing
- To share information about financial and admin. Systems.
- [REDACTED] to look at Vocational GCSEs established at [REDACTED]

Partnership Costs:

Staff will claim travelling expenses according to their school's claim system.

The cost of teacher time for planning meetings etc. will be.

Up to scale 3 200 pounds per day.

Scale 4 250 pounds per day

Above scale 4 300 pounds per day

Other Issues

To draw up a Development Plan/Model for Partnership initiatives ready for the next SMT joint meeting in November

To consider the use of the Inset day in January for Partnership business.

PARTNERSHIP.

Joint Senior Management meeting (Wednesday 6.11.02.)

Minutes.

Present: [REDACTED]

Review of Joint Literacy Initiative.

The meeting of staff from both schools took place on Monday 30th September at [REDACTED].

The following foci for development were agreed by the curriculum areas involved:

- English - To develop resources, teach and assess a discursive essay with Year 8
- Geography - To develop literacy skills through the "World Population" topic with Year 8
- RE - Basic RE spelling (keywords). Introducing oracy units into the Year 8 POS.
- History - Developing "active listening" skills. Speaking and assessment in oracy.

Since this meeting took place, the Head of English at [REDACTED] has been on sickness leave. The Head of History has resigned her post, although she will continue to teach at the school. A new Head of History has been appointed for January. Work has begun on curriculum development that emphasises literacy skills in the Geography area.

Other Partnership initiatives - update.

- The exchange of Science teachers is taking place at the moment, following successful planning meetings.
- [REDACTED] has made one visit to [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] re Cross-phase tracking, and has been invited to the next Primary/Secondary conference at [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED] Head of Science at [REDACTED] has made one visit to [REDACTED] re information about applications for AST status.

Further Initiatives.

- The exchange of teachers for the Spring Term could involve the Languages Departments. [REDACTED] to speak to [REDACTED].
- Support for the [REDACTED] Drama department from the Drama AST at [REDACTED].
- Technology curriculum areas to meet and discuss departmental organisation and best practice.
- [REDACTED] SENCO to visit [REDACTED].
- SMT Work Shadowing to take place ([REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]).
- Links between RE departments. [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] to visit [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED] to use [REDACTED] experience to explore development of Vocational GCSEs. Possible curriculum areas for development would be ICT and Business Studies.

- The sharing of ideas about the development of ICT as part of the KS3 Strategy.

Other Options.

- To develop teacher shadowing programmes for classroom teachers.
- A "pupil pursuit" scheme.
- Sharing effective practice in school administration and organising student work experience.
- January Training Day – each school to identify its own needs for Staff Inset. If common needs are identified there could be joint planning and delivery.

Joint Governor Committee meeting.

This meeting to take place in January. [redacted] to contact Governors [redacted] and [redacted].

[redacted] and [redacted] to write a report of Partnership activities to date to present to the meeting.

Appendix 11

Virgo and Leo: Action Plan

LEA/SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

ACTION PLANNING	SCHOOLS INVOLVED	Key issue that the school in concern needs to address (from OFSTED action plan/LEA concern)					
		EVALUATION METHODS	TASKS/ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE & ALLOCATION	PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING THE TASKS	COSTS
What are the areas for action? What do we want to achieve?	Against what criteria will success be judged?	How will the school/LEA evaluate the degree to which the criteria have been met?	What are the tasks which need to be done in order to hit the target?	What is the timescale? How many days allocated?	Who will carry out the task?	Who will monitor the carrying out of the tasks?	How much will it cost to carry out each of the tasks? Income source?
Departmental learning activities in order to share and disseminate good practice between the two schools	At least four departments working and planning together by April 2003	Number of departments is reached	Humanities, English, ICT and one other identified department Sharing good practice in Literacy and ICT	Sept. 2002 - April 2003	█ and █ Departmental staff in both schools	Headteachers █ and █	Travel for 4 meetings for 30 staff
Use of ASTs to develop good Teaching and Learning Practice in the schools	Links and visits by ASTs to █ and to █ ASTs by █ staff	14 Visits have been made	ASTs have helped develop "lone practitioners" in their subject at █ - Technology, Drama, MFL, History	Nov. 2002 - April 2003	ASTs	Headteachers █ and █	Travel costs for ASTs Travel & supply for █

LEA/SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

ACTION PLANNING	SCHOOLS INVOLVED	Key issue that the school in concern needs to address (from OFSTED action plan/LEA concern)					
		EVALUATION METHODS	TASKS/ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE & ALLOCATION	PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING THE TASKS	COSTS
What are the areas for action? What do we want to achieve?	Against what criteria will success be judged?	How will the school/LEA evaluate the degree to which the criteria have been met?	What are the tasks which need to be done in order to hit the target?	What is the timescale? How many days allocated?	Who will carry out the task?	Who will monitor the carrying out of the tasks?	How much will it cost to carry out each of the tasks? Income source?
Minimise the professional isolation of [REDACTED] staff and allow access by [REDACTED] staff to a different ethos	Best practice shared between institutions	3 individual 1-week teacher exchanges have taken place and de-briefs noted	Exchanges organised between 3 different subject teachers in each half-term	Nov. 2002 – April 2003	[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Identified teachers	Headteachers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]	Planning Travel Debrief Ex gratia payment for staff
Develop the potential of Team Leaders to take partnership priorities and school forward	i) Use of HeadMn/ICT to improve ICT teaching and learning in schools ii) Use Head Sci to promote improved T&L via mutual observation and lesson observation	i) Evidence of strategies for T&L in ICT in place	i) Head of Maths/ICT released for development activity and meetings with ICT Co-ordinator at [REDACTED]	i) Jan 2003 – Sept. 2003	[REDACTED]	Headteachers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]	Cost of Part-time Maths/Science teacher = £5,500
		ii) Increased lesson observations in place and consequent staff focus on high quality T&L	ii) Head of Science – paired observations, mutual observation, visits to [REDACTED] to access T&L standards	ii) Jan 2003 – Sept. 2003	[REDACTED]		

LEA/SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

ACTION PLANNING	SCHOOLS INVOLVED	Key issue that the school in concern needs to address (from OFSTED action plan/LEA concern)					
		EVALUATION METHODS	TASKS/ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE & ALLOCATION	PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING THE TASKS	COSTS
Develop Primary Liaison systems at [redacted]	Primary/Secondary cluster group agrees transition model using [redacted] practice to inform	Information transfer plan in place for tracking pupils.	[redacted] visits to [redacted] [redacted] and [redacted] meet Primary colleagues and develop model for [redacted]	Sept. 2002 – Sept 2003	[redacted] and [redacted]	Headteachers [redacted] and [redacted]	EP visits (travel & supply 2 days) Meeting costs & Primary supply cover
Establish robust financial procedures at [redacted]	Budget recovers and financial staff have necessary confidence and competence	Overspends are minimised and accounted for. Satisfactory audits and Responsible Officers' report	Consultancy from [redacted] staff and other consultants. Office review provides adequate reception area to allow finance staff uninterrupted work	Nov. 2003 – April 2003	Headteachers and Bursars Other financial consultants	[redacted] Headteacher LEA financial staff	Consultan 6 days – Reception area – Increased admin. Assistance =
Increase strategic effectiveness of Leadership team at [redacted]	Headteacher and Assistant Heads introduce dynamic model of development planning and raise profile with staff	All in the organisation are aware of the key objectives and are committed to them	i) New long, medium and short-term plan in place ii) New planning and evaluation model in place	i) By July 2003 ii) By April 2004	Leadership Team at [redacted]	Headteacher [redacted]	Additional input to Leadership Team

LEA/SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

ACTION PLANNING		Key issue that the school in concern needs to address (from OFSTED action plan/LEA concern)					
FOCUS/TARGET	SCHOOLS INVOLVED SUCCESS CRITERIA	EVALUATION METHODS	TASKS/ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE & ALLOCATION	PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING THE TASKS	COSTS
Increase student responsibility and care of others	Number of chances for pupil involvement have increased at [redacted] and instances of bullying are reduced	Evidence of bullying incidents and student involvement around the school	Enhance Student Council. Visits by [redacted] Head Boy and Head Girl to [redacted] to observe School Council [redacted] staff training	Nov. 2002 – Apr. 2003	[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]	Headteachers [redacted] and [redacted]	
			Peer mentoring model developed at [redacted] using best practice (PRU and [redacted] Visits by [redacted] Heads of Year to [redacted]	Nov. 2002 – Jul 2003	[redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]	Headteachers esp. [redacted]	

LEA/SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

ACTION PLANNING	SCHOOLS INVOLVED	Key issue that the school in concern needs to address (from OFSTED action plan/LEA concern)					
		EVALUATION METHODS	TASKS/ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE & ALLOCATION	PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING THE TASKS	COSTS
Balance to be used by [REDACTED] for identified activity towards OFSTED planning. This may include training and consultancy and supply cover to enable [REDACTED] staff to access it or funding to release the proactivity of [REDACTED] Leadership Team				Jan 2002 – April 2003	[REDACTED]	SDA Principal Adviser	

Appendix 12

Virgo and Leo: Science Exchange

Report on teacher exchange 4th – 8th November 2002

During the week beginning 4th November 2002 I was involved in a teacher exchange with [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] High School. We swapped timetables for the week and carried out each other's jobs, as they would normally be done. I found the exchange very worthwhile in terms of my professional development.

Context

The Science department is much larger consisting of around 18 staff and 6 technicians. Group sizes are typically larger compared to [REDACTED] with an ability range more skewed towards more able pupils. However, the level of learning support is limited and received support for one of the lessons I taught.

Similarities

There are a number of similarities between the 2 schools. The expectancy in terms of behaviour is high in both schools and is reflected in sound positive learning environments that are created. There are 5 teaching periods in a day as at [REDACTED]. The schemes of work that are delivered at KS3 are very similar in principle with variations on the same theme. At KS4 the schemes are identical with more ideas in approaches to practical work. This is based on a modular scheme. On the whole the behaviour of pupils was the same. There are still behaviour problems especially on a whole school scale. For example, on the Wednesday afternoon, which happened to be a day of heavy rain, the fire alarm was set off twice and the school was evacuated on both occasions, causing great disruption to lessons. However, there was the same calm working atmosphere in classrooms as found at [REDACTED].

Differences

The increased size of the department entails many differences in the departments. The department has many more activities in terms of clubs and arranged out of school visits. The school can also offer many more resources for the pupils especially in library and ICT facilities. The technicians play a less active role within the department the main feature of this is that any photocopying is done by the teacher. Technicians are also unavailable for setting out the equipment within the classroom. Registration period also offers different opportunities. With there being a sixth form students come in once a week and offer help to those lower down the school. Outside authorities also have involvement. One activity during the week involved [REDACTED] Waste Education Evaluation project where pupils were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Organisers are also hardback with many pupils using plastic covers with personal photos. This gave pupils more value for their organisers. There is also no afternoon registration period. I felt this was a disadvantage as any problems within the form could not be addressed so easily and would generally wait till the next day. However, there were no organised reading and spelling clubs for the less able pupils. There was an obvious difference in ability at KS4. The top sets were amazingly keen and academically able. There appeared to be no structured strategy to deal with low-level behaviour (apart from normal teaching ideas) such as CLUMBJETS, which has had a good impact at [REDACTED]. The school also runs on a two weekly timetable. Many pupils found this confusing and were often seen to be lacking equipment.

How will the experience impact my teaching?

The experience has had a good impact on my teaching. It has made me more aware of the needs of pupils that are more able and provided me with new ideas in my approach to challenging pupils. My efforts previously at [REDACTED] have mainly been concentrated in differentiating for the less able. With technicians only providing equipment for a lesson, not setting any out, it helped my classroom management skills. I had to use strategies to keep pupils occupied whilst setting the equipment out. I have further developed these skills when I need to "buy time" at [REDACTED].

Ideas for the department.

The main issue that I noticed at [REDACTED] Science department was the increased number of meetings. Although the size of the department dictates this I feel that MHS would benefit from a regular departmental meeting. Currently there are curriculum team meetings that are infrequent and involve the technology department. Therefore, Science department issues cannot take priority.

Ideas for the pastoral team.

[REDACTED] offers a different system in that tutorial work is based on a one to one system, with PSE carried out separately on a whole class scale. This one to one system would provide pupils with more of a chance to discuss problems. There are also year team meetings every Monday morning to discuss the week's events and problems with particular pupils. Assemblies are carried out on a weekly basis but on a yearly scale only due to the large student body.

Whole school issues.

A major issue at [REDACTED] is the lack of duty staff at lunchtime. At [REDACTED] staff are timetabled to do one duty per week. This increases monitoring of behaviour at lunchtime. Also rooms are available that staff supervises that provide pupils with another area to go to get away from the hectic pace of life at [REDACTED]. The feeling of some pupils at [REDACTED] is that there is nowhere to go at lunchtime and therefore cannot cater for this. Although it may be an extra hassle for staff, many pupils used this facility and behaviour could be monitored. It wasn't all bad for staff though as a free lunch was provided.

Advice for future teacher exchanges.

A longer preparation time would be beneficial. However, this does take the teacher out of the classroom and the main difficulty I found was getting back on track when I returned to [REDACTED]. I feel a period after the exchange of "off timetable" time would be of greater benefit. This would provide a chance to catch up on marking etc. It would have also been helpful to observe [REDACTED] teaching beforehand. This would aid in the different approaches used and a chance to build relationships with pupils, a value of great importance in my view. An observation by staff at [REDACTED] of my lessons would also have helped, especially when there are opportunities to gain advice from Advanced Skills Teachers. A debriefing opportunity would have also added value to the experience in order to share ideas on approaches that worked failed with the pupils we teach on a daily basis. This has been a great help in personal development although many ideas are not transferable due to the size difference in the school. However, I would say that it was a well worthwhile experience and suggest that future exchanges are carried out.

How will the experience impact my teaching?

The experience has had a good impact on my teaching. It has made me more aware of the needs of pupils that are more able and provided me with new ideas in my approach to challenging pupils. My efforts previously at [REDACTED] have mainly been concentrated in differentiating for the less able. With technicians only providing equipment for a lesson, not setting any out, it helped my classroom management skills. I had to use strategies to keep pupils occupied whilst setting the equipment out. I have further developed these skills when I need to "buy time" at [REDACTED].

Ideas for the department.

The main issue that I noticed at [REDACTED] Science department was the increased number of meetings. Although the size of the department dictates this I feel that MHS would benefit from a regular departmental meeting. Currently there are curriculum team meetings that are infrequent and involve the technology department. Therefore, Science department issues cannot take priority.

Ideas for the pastoral team.

[REDACTED] offers a different system in that tutorial work is based on a one to one system, with PSE carried out separately on a whole class scale. This one to one system would provide pupils with more of a chance to discuss problems. There are also year team meetings every Monday morning to discuss the week's events and problems with particular pupils. Assemblies are carried out on a weekly basis but on a yearly scale only due to the large student body.

Whole school issues.

A major issue at [REDACTED] is the lack of duty staff at lunchtime. At [REDACTED] staff are timetabled to do one duty per week. This increases monitoring of behaviour at lunchtime. Also rooms are available that staff supervises that provide pupils with another area to go to get away from the hectic pace of life at [REDACTED]. The feeling of some pupils at [REDACTED] is that there is nowhere to go at lunchtime and therefore cannot cater for this. Although it may be an extra hassle for staff, many pupils used this facility and behaviour could be monitored. It wasn't all bad for staff though as a free lunch was provided.

Advice for future teacher exchanges.

A longer preparation time would be beneficial. However, this does take the teacher out of the classroom and the main difficulty I found was getting back on track when I returned to [REDACTED]. I feel a period after the exchange of "off timetable" time would be of greater benefit. This would provide a chance to catch up on marking etc. It would have also been helpful to observe [REDACTED] teaching beforehand. This would aid in the different approaches used and a chance to build relationships with pupils, a value of great importance in my view. An observation by staff at [REDACTED] of my lessons would also have helped, especially when there are opportunities to gain advice from Advanced Skills Teachers. A debriefing opportunity would have also added value to the experience in order to share ideas on approaches that worked failed with the pupils we teach on a daily basis. This has been a great help in personal development although many ideas are not transferable due to the size difference in the school. However, I would say that it was a well worthwhile experience and suggest that future exchanges are carried out.

As a department there are many differences between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Equipment is a key issue at [REDACTED], the department has much less funding and therefore is less well equipped. Many basic practical resources including Bunsen burners have to be shared between labs, and practical work coordinated accordingly between teachers. Technicians play a more active role in the department, organising all photocopying for teachers and helping provide equipment and set up practical work within lessons e.g. pour boiling water or acid, or dish out ice chips to students. Ordering of equipment is also different, for KS4 the lesson number from the scheme of work comes with a technician equipment list that can be used to order the equipment required for the lesson using the lesson number only on a planner, plus any extra equipment needed can be added on.

Teaching groups are also different. As already highlighted, teaching groups at [REDACTED] are smaller and pupils are set broadly by ability from year 8. There are only four teaching sets at KS3, and three GCSE sets and a Science Plus group at KS4.

At KS4 each teacher has a specialism (Chemistry, Biology or Physics) that he or she teaches, and will teach their subject to all of the GCSE classes in the year at some point over the three terms. The exception is the Science Plus group which is taught by one teacher only for the year.

Top sets in years 10 and 11 are less able at [REDACTED] than at [REDACTED]. It appears that many more able pupils travel to selective entry schools in nearby [REDACTED] therefore removing the very able students from [REDACTED] intake. This impacts heavily on teaching strategies and differentiation, and to some extent on the expectations of the teachers of the students, and of the students themselves of their own ability.

How will the experience impact my teaching?

The experience as a whole has had a big impact on my teaching. It has made me much more aware of the needs of SEN pupils, especially those with dyslexia, and the importance of differentiation to make the curriculum more accessible for them. It has also given me many good strategies for doing this. It was enjoyable to teach many classes in a year group, and after only a week I found I knew many of the pupils in the corridor, which made [REDACTED] seem more intimate and friendly than [REDACTED]. This rapport was also useful within the classroom. Pupils were more likely to display difficult behaviour at [REDACTED] and as a result I have developed more effective classroom and pupil management strategies. In general, motivation seemed poorer at [REDACTED] than [REDACTED] and many of the pupils commented that they were thought to be "more stupid" than pupils at other schools in the area. This meant that I had to think carefully about pace and challenge in lessons (helped by a big bag of sweets and stickers for good work!!). Pupils are only just beginning to celebrate success in a positive way, the recently installed merit system seems to be working for KS3, but it is proving more difficult at KS4.

Ideas for the area

In general there are some good department and whole school policies in place at [REDACTED] regarding expectations of pupils. One good idea is for pupils to unpack their bag at the start of the lesson and to clearly display all of the equipment needed for that lesson. If they do not have the required equipment then they are given an "E" as part of the CLUMBJETS scheme (see later). This avoids pupils arriving unprepared for the lesson and disrupting the flow of the lesson because they haven't got a pen or their book.

Ideas for the pastoral team

Many of the schemes in place for pastoral work at [REDACTED] are very similar to those at [REDACTED]. Pupils have PSE throughout and no tutorials at [REDACTED], although I feel that the tutorial system at [REDACTED] is a real strength. Year teams at [REDACTED] are much smaller, with the staff as a whole being more aware of each pupil's individual situation because the school is much smaller. Assemblies are held every week for the whole school, and twice a month for year assemblies, generally led by the Head of Year. [REDACTED] have an elected Head Boy and Head Girl, and have a prefect system in Year 11, in order to make them more responsible.

Whole School Issues

The school has recently begun a behaviour management scheme named CLUMBJETS (chewing, lying, uniform, make up, behaviour, jewellery, equipment, toilets and swearing), to impress upon pupils the effects of misbehaviour. If a pupil does something that deserves a sanction e.g. chewing gum, being late to lessons, or not having appropriate equipment with them they are given the corresponding letter for their misdemeanour in their organiser. Any pupil who collects three or more letters in their organiser in a week receives a pastoral detention. Many pupils respond well to this scheme, and many seem prepared to accept the punishment because they realise that they have done wrong. The CLUMBJETS list is displayed clearly in all rooms and can be applied by teachers and support staff at all times. It appears to be an effective replacement for the [REDACTED] A14 detention scheme.

Advice for future exchange teachers

The exchange this time seemed very rushed through, [REDACTED] and I feel that we would have benefited from more time to become acclimatised to the exchange schools. We would also have liked to observe each other teaching our own classes in our own environment in order to compare the classes in our own experience. I was not observed whilst at [REDACTED], and feel that it would have been a more effective opportunity to share good practice if we had the chance to observe and to be observed by others in the departments during the week. A debriefing session at the end for both teachers to swap notes and impressions would be a good idea, sadly not achieved as yet by [REDACTED] and myself due to time.

In general I feel this had been very useful for [REDACTED] and myself although perhaps not as effective for our departments or whole schools as it has the potential to be. I think if this type of exchange were to be carried out again more time would need to be devoted to it, with careful planning of observations and experience for both teachers in the time leading up to the exchange, as well as lots of opportunities for the sharing of good practice both ways over the course of the exchange. Teacher exchanges such as these can only benefit everyone involved. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] both have great strengths, and I feel we have a lot to learn from one another. This was an enjoyable and valuable experience and one which I would like to repeat again.

Appendix 13

Virgo and Leo: Transition Project

Transition between the Primary and Secondary Phases

Report on the visits to [REDACTED]

Over the past few years [REDACTED]'s main aim has been to establish and develop links with the main primary feeder schools within the [REDACTED] area. This has been achieved in a number of ways culminating, more recently, in a pilot project between [REDACTED] Junior School and [REDACTED] that was conducted last year.

What has been happening?

- Initially, all Headteachers from the primary schools were invited to a Primary/Secondary conference to discuss what was needed between the schools. This resulted in members of staff from the Technology Department at [REDACTED] teaching in the feeder schools for one hour every two weeks over a period of one year. Subsequent years involved the science and mathematics departments. From the secondary input into primary schools, links were established and relationships developed.
- Conferences became part of the process and now these are held three times a year, between the Year 6 class teachers, the Year 7 pastoral team and members from departments involved in transition. There are also Primary/Secondary Heads conferences held at various times throughout the year. During the conference, feedback will take place between the primary and secondary schools. Issues that may be discussed are: transition, how records can be collected from primary schools without putting too much burden on the primary staff, feedback on past pupils. In the past there have been speakers, but one speaker who was constantly mentioned - [REDACTED], University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education. One of the great benefits has been that primary and secondary teachers have moderated and levelled KS2 work together, compiling exemplar booklets in the three core curricula areas for secondary school staff. This has given [REDACTED] the opportunity to build on what their new pupils achieved at KS2.
- [REDACTED] has a dedicated KS3 strategy group who work in close liaison with the primary schools.
- [REDACTED] currently use "Target Tracker" for receiving data from primary schools. At the last conference they were beginning to refine the information required. Next year, it is planned that all staff at [REDACTED] will have received relevant information, i.e. levels, raw scores, before the end of the summer term. For example, this year, the Maths Department were able to set the pupils from the beginning of the autumn term. The pastoral team also visit schools during the summer term to speak with pupils and to collect any additional information from class teachers. There was no mention of the use of the Common Transfer File.
- The pilot - [REDACTED] School (see attached report from [REDACTED]).

Resources needed

Members of staff from [REDACTED] are released to work with primary schools. This involves time, not only in delivering the lessons, but also in the planning and subsequent feedback between the schools. It also requires funding to sustain the current links, which they have established. The funding has been obtained through the school receiving technology status and from [REDACTED]

Suggestions

- Agree with feeder schools a common approach on the additional information to accompany the CTF and the use of "Target Tracker".
- Improve continuity of the curriculum between Year 6 and Year 7.
- Develop a structured programme to prepare pupils for any significant changes in teaching approaches between KS2 and KS3.
- Evaluate the impact of transfer arrangements – pupil's attitudes (Year 7 at [REDACTED] have recently completed a questionnaire on transition).
- Above all, make the initial contact with the primary Headteachers, Year 6 class teachers – and ask what they want?

Appendix 14

Aries and Gemini: Partnership Plan

KEY ISSUE BEING ADDRESSED:		LEAD STAFF - JWO	LEAD GOVERNOR-		KEY ISSUE NUMBER							
WHAT IS TO BE DONE:		Partnership Action Plan					PARTNERSHIP/ SUPPORT					
What is to be done (in terms of clear and specific actions).	Who is to do it (who is responsible for ensuring the action takes place, and who else is involved).	When will it be done (time scale with key milestones)	What resources are required (in particular, how the school intends to use Standards Fund Grant, including funding for teacher development).	Success criteria (quantitative targets where possible) against which progress will be judged).	How progress will be monitored (by whom, when and how).	How progress will be evaluated (by whom, when and how).				LEA	EXCELLENCE CLUSTER	LIG
Peer reviews to identify common areas for development and individual areas of weakness. Visits to both schools (LIG)		February 2003 and annually thereafter	Time for the review and meetings.	Review taken place and outcomes identified.	Through discussion and liaison with LEA ()	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body	✓	✓				✓
Development of AST post and link with AST (who is KS3 and Literacy co-ordinator)	- AST (Supported by LEA AST programme).	Jun-03	Cover time to enable meetings to take place.	feels effective in post and is able to offer support as required at	Through discussion with . Through perusal of relevant documentation.	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body	✓	✓		✓		
staff invited to attend workshop sessions on February 13th Training Day	Linking with the Consortium for School Improvement.	February 2003.	No additional resources required. Feb 14th identified as Staff Conference for preparation of the School Plan.	Staff attend sessions as determined. Staff attend conference and contribute to School Plan.	Reports to SMT	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body	✓	✓				
Establish links with Initial Teacher Training Programme through GTP and OU schemes. Develop and partner School in ITT programme.(LIG)	and working alongside AST	February 2003.	Contribution towards salary costs and training costs. Time to be arranged for working in and and vice-versa	Better recruitment and training of unqualified staff. High success rate of training courses.	reporting back to and to SMT. Feedback to SMT through Line Management Meetings	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body. By governors following visits to the school.	✓	✓	✓			✓

KEY ISSUE BEING ADDRESSED:		LEAD STAFF - JWO	LEAD GOVERNOR-		KEY ISSUE NUMBER								
WHAT IS TO BE DONE:		Partnership Action Plan					PARTNERSHIP/ SUPPORT						
What is to be done (in terms of clear and specific actions).	Who is to do it (who is responsible for ensuring the action takes place, and who else is involved).	When will it be done (time scale with key milestones)	What resources are required (in particular, how the school intends to use Standards Fund Grant, including funding for teacher development).	Success criteria (quantitative targets where possible) against which progress will be judged).	How progress will be monitored (by whom, when and how).	How progress will be evaluated (by whom, when and how).					LEA	EXCELLENCE CLUSTER	LIG
Peer reviews to identify common areas for development and individual areas of weakness. Visits to both schools (LIG)		February 2003 and annually thereafter	Time for the review and meetings.	Review taken place and outcomes identified.	Through discussion and liaison with LEA	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body	✓	✓					✓
Development of AST post and link with AST (who is KS3 and Literacy co-ordinator)	- AST (Supported by LEA AST programme).	Jun-03	Cover time to enable meetings to take place	feels effective in post and is able to offer support as required at	Through discussion with. Through perusal of relevant documentation.	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body	✓	✓		✓			
staff invited to attend workshop sessions on February 13th Training Day	Linking with the Consortium for School Improvement.	February 2003.	No additional resources required. Feb 14th identified as Staff Conference for preparation of the School Plan.	Staff attend sessions as determined. Staff attend conference and contribute to School Plan.	Reports to SMT	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body	✓	✓					
Establish links with Initial Teacher Training Programme through GTP and OU schemes. Develop and partner School in ITT programme (LIG)	and working alongside AST	February 2003.	Contribution towards salary costs and training costs. Time to be arranged for working in and and vice-versa	Better recruitment and training of unqualified staff. High success rate of training courses.	reporting back to and to SMT. Feedback to SMT through Line Management Meetings	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body. By governors following visits to the school.	✓	✓	✓				✓

5	Support for Science in particular with the development of KS3 courses.	██████ at ████████ LEA support and AST support from other schools.	To begin March 2003.	Internal cover to be arranged by both schools. Dissemination through department meetings and workshop sessions	50% of pupils achieve level 5 plus in the SATs this year.	██████ reporting to ████████ & SMT	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body. By governors following visits to the school.	✓	✓		✓			
6	Investigate the use of ICT in Science at ████████ to bid for funds from partnership to create ICT network for Science.	County 'Expert' Teacher in collaboration with PA	February 2003.	Internal cover to be arranged by both schools. Dissemination through department meetings and workshop sessions	50% of pupils achieve level 5 plus in the SATs this year.	██████ reporting to ████████ & SMT	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body. By governors following visits to the school.	✓	✓		✓			
7	Investigate Independent learning approaches and use of ICT.	██████ and ████████ - as part of the Gifted and Talented programmes.	Begin in March 2003	Internal cover to be arranged by both schools. Dissemination through department meetings and workshop sessions	50% of pupils achieve level 5 plus in the SATs this year.	██████ reporting to ████████ & SMT	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body. By governors following visits to the school.	✓				✓		
8	Development of ████████ Gifted and Talented programme. Visits to ████████ and attend Consortium for School Improvement Sessions. Attend national training for G&T.	██████ to attend sessions and represent ████████ at the Excellence Cluster G & T strand meetings.	To begin February 2003.	Internal cover to be arranged by both schools. Dissemination through department meetings and workshop sessions	Pupils on the Gifted and Talented Register to achieve at levels commensurate with ability.	██████ reporting to SMT.	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body. By governors following visits to the school.	✓	✓			✓		
9	Development of strategies to reduce permanent and fixed term exclusions.	██████, ████████ and ████████ Inclusion strategies. ████████ from ████████	On-going	Internal cover to be arranged by both schools. Dissemination through department meetings and workshop sessions	Reduction of fixed term and permanent exclusions by 25% across the year. September to September.	Reports to Governors Pupil Welfare Committee by ████████	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body. By governors following visits to the school.	✓	✓					
10	Development of strategies to improve attendance and punctuality.	██████ & HoYs working with admin and support staff. ████████ from ████████	To begin in January with a punctuality audit.	Internal cover to be arranged by both schools.	Reduction in lateness by 50% over the year.	Reports to Governors Pupil Welfare Committee by ████████	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body. By governors following visits to the school.	✓	✓					

16	Diagnosis of Trial Exams to be completed early and diagnostic approach to be taken. Departments to take necessary actions to raise standards. (Link to	and in liaison with exams officer and with HoDs.	January 2004 and May/June 2004	Internal cover where required.	Better test and examination results. More confident pupils.	reporting to SMT	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body. By governors following visits to the school.	✓					
17	Develop close working liaison in particular relation to LIG (See School Plan)	and and and	February 2003.	Time for the review and meetings.	Review taken place and outcomes identified.	Through discussion and liaison with LEA ()	By reporting back to the relevant Governing Body.	✓	✓		✓		✓

Appendix 15

Libra and Taurus: Twinning Partnership

[REDACTED] High School and [REDACTED] Community College Partnership

Action Plan following meeting at the [REDACTED] Community College between ([REDACTED] [REDACTED] (VP- [REDACTED]) and ([REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (LEA seconded deputy) on Friday 1st November 2002 and updated

Nature of Activity	Action to date	Impact	Success Indicators	Monitoring and Evaluation	Resources
1. AST Support 2. Teacher Support activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [REDACTED] (Sci/Wednes)/[REDACTED] (Art, Photography, Media Studies, General Studies) Tuesday/[REDACTED] (Eng) Monday. There is no MFL AST at [REDACTED] but line-manages the ASTs [REDACTED] met with [REDACTED] to ensure that the [REDACTED] AST's work through her and they will meet so that their input can be channelled in the most effective way [REDACTED] to ascertain level of support required in PE (Nov 02). Funding to be arranged later. [REDACTED] to get back to [REDACTED] Contact made with [REDACTED] Jan 03 – more contact after inspection Discussion took place about the possibility of the [REDACTED] offering support to [REDACTED] Girls' PE Dept. [REDACTED] has already approached [REDACTED] (Head of Girls' PE at [REDACTED]) Jan 03 contact to be made again with [REDACTED] following the resignation of [REDACTED]. Liase with [REDACTED] over the focus of support. Support from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] in photography and Science Dec 02. 	<p>Reports available from ASTs on the impact of work in the classroom. Less callout and lesson obs show that a wider range of T&L strategies are in use (See ASTs). [REDACTED] had a successful visit to the [REDACTED] in Dec 02. Report available. Rise in confidence level. Work ongoing with BUS and [REDACTED]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less support needed in the classroom Wider variety of T&L strategies seen through lesson observations Satisfactory grading form HMI/OFSTE D 		<p>AST Days</p> <p>Travel costs</p> <p>18days of supply @ (£165) = £2,970</p> <p>Resources = £2,000</p>
PAP LINK Key Issue 1					

Nature of Activity	Action to date	Impact	Success Indicators	Monitoring and Evaluation	Resources
3. Pastoral support (Yr 9)	<p>The [redacted] Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) is in some ways similar to the LSU at [redacted] but on a smaller scale. After analysing exclusions, pupil behaviour details, and asking staff, [redacted] has identified 12 students (2-Yr7 and 10 from Yrs 8 and 9/2 girls and 10 boys). For the next 3 weeks until 22nd Nov., students are withdrawn from lessons and follow a specially tailored programme Run by [redacted] (Assistant Head - [redacted]).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The visit to the [redacted] did not take place and will need to be re-scheduled in the light of the new LSU working practices 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of good practice between the two schools 		6 days @ £165 = £990
OAP LINK Key Issue 2					
4. Collaborative working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See 1 and 2. In addition, [redacted] to discuss with ASTs the idea of collaborative planning of lessons 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson plans more robust as a result of collaborative planning 		See above
OAP LINK Key Issue 1					

Nature of Activity	Action to date	Impact	Success Indicators	Monitoring and Evaluation	Resources
7. Joint Target setting		[redacted] to discuss with [redacted] and [redacted] [redacted] possible collaboration			6x0.5 days x 3 delegates = 9 days @ £165 = £1,485
OAP LINK					
Key issue 6					
8. Lit/Num work/Transfer work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colne has enlisted the services of Bob [redacted] – ex Primary Head (2 days a week Monday and Friday) to transfer the information from new Year 6 pupils. [redacted] Primary School has recently acquired Beacon Status and is working with [redacted] Target Tracker. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More liaison between KS2 and KS3 Continued improved start for Year 7 in September 03 		3 days @ £165 = £495
OAP LINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting taken place between [redacted] and [redacted] Contacts established and [redacted] has contacted local Primary Heads 				
Key Issue 1					

<p>6. Middle Management training</p> <p>LINK To School Development Plan</p> <p>SLT "LINK" programme of Support</p>	<p>To secure an improvement in T&L through the training of subject leaders in a collaborative approach. A Consultant has been contacted (██████████) and the training would take place on 3 days (Spring/Summer/Autumn 03) at ██████████ and a local hotel. After discussions with ██████████ and ██████████ it was felt that the ██████████ would prefer to send their stronger subject leaders ie those part of the ██████████ "Innovations Group"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible focus to discuss in Jan 03 ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ 	<p>██████████ to meet with ██████████ to discuss choice of subject leaders/dates/release of staff (possibly after Yrs 11 and 13 have gone?). ██████████ to get back to ██████████ with names, possible dates for him to contact ██████████</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and Leadership of Depts improve and this is noted by external valuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff questionnaire after the training 	<p>£6,000</p>
--	---	--	--	--	---------------

Nature of Activity	Action to date	Impact	Success Indicators	Monitoring and Evaluation	Resources
5. Transforming Learning Project	<p>TSL is a project set up by Hay McBeer to improve the quality of T&L. Teachers make a difference to students' learning in the classroom and therefore the "classroom climate" can be the catalyst for change.</p> <p>██████████ (Head - ██████████) and ██████████ (LEA) have discussed this project and a Pilot Project has been set up at ██████████. Heading up the Pilot are - ██████████ (VP- ██████████), ██████████ (ICT- ██████████), ██████████ (History- ██████████).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan 03 KS to contact ██████████ to move this project on 	<p>██████████ to meet with Jane ██████████ to determine the remit of the Pilot and will then share the information with ██████████ to see if this is an area of possible partnership.</p>			£3,000
<p>OAP LINK</p> <p>Key Issue 1</p>					

Nature of Activity	Action to date	Impact	Success Indicators	Monitoring and Evaluation	Resources
9. Joint LSA training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for [REDACTED] LSU/SEN Depts to have joint training on INSET Day 6/1/03 Meeting set for 17/12/03 Meeting and project unable to go ahead because of [REDACTED] prior commitments on 6/1/03 	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of good practice between the 2 schools and between SEN/LSU Depts. 		£3000
OAP LINK					General supply days for all activities £2,000 (9x £165x 2 terms)
Key Issues 1&2					Travel and Refreshments costs = £500 GRAND TOTAL £22,440

Appendix 16

‘How are they now?’

How are they now?

This summary is drawn from a combination of discussions with SLAs, headteachers, and information from LEA Reviews, Ofsted reports, Pandas and Fisher Family Trust and LEA Data.

Two of the partnerships developed through the LEA strategy have continued; Virgo remains in partnership with Leo and Cancer with Aquarius. All the schools are still on the LEA Register for SCC, either at Level 1 for intensive support or Level 2 for close monitoring. There are no changes of headteacher.

The Capricorn School remains on the SCC Register (level 1), but is likely to be moved to Level 2 in Summer 2006. There is no partnership with The Sagittarius School but some shared work has developed through the LIG collaborative and with feeder schools. Over time, standards have showed gradual improvement although overall they remain significantly lower than expected. Early improvement at KS3 was not matched at KS4 where results remained disappointing until 2005. Progress through special measures was monitored by HMI and in July 2004, the category was removed. Key to this improvement is;- strengthening of the SMT, recruitment of good subject teachers, the support of KS3 National Strategy consultants and the work of the Education Welfare Service. The school is far more aware of its own performance and data is used more productively. The headteacher works closely with the LEA to address all the key issues. The LEA view is that capacity to improve is good although much depends on recruitment and retention of staff. The school is applying for Specialist School Status and a recent land sale has provided funds for a proposed new build. Should these take place they will further contribute to the school's improved standing in the local community. Over time Capricorn has developed the structures, confidence and capacity to improve.

The Cancer School was removed from the SCC Register following Ofsted Inspection Spring 2006. Improvements in ethos, behaviour and staff recruitment noted in LEA review and HMI monitoring have not yet impacted on standards. Results are patchy; improvement in English as KS3 has not been matched by Maths and Science where results are significantly lower than expected; standards at KS4 have declined further this year. The roll continues to fall; there are not enough pupils in the local community to go around and Cancer is the bottom of the pile. This has caused considerable budget problems and staff redundancies. The partnership with The Aquarius School continues to support the development of staff through joint Inset and some 'two way' collaboration at Departmental level. The head of The Aquarius has developed his role as critical friend and also attended the LEA Cross Service Meeting about The Cancer School. The Cancer School is now able to make good use of consultants, advisers and ASTs to tackle teaching and learning issues. The capacity of the school to improve is good but the future of the school remains uncertain. The Cancer School has improved, but is unlikely to survive.

The Virgo School moved from Level 1 to Level 2 on the SCC register in 2003 and is likely to be removed completely as concerns about leadership and capacity to improve, have been addressed. The school is gaining an improved reputation and the roll has increased and has an ability profile which shows a rising trend. The budget is now positive and a four phase capital building programme is underway. The strategies for creating a positive learning community have impacted on standards. The Continuous Professional Development of staff has advanced significantly. Although not dramatic, results at KS3 and KS4 have gradually improved as have Value Added KS2-3 and KS3-4. The key to this improvement is the determination of the headteacher. She is currently leading the bid for Specialist School Status in Mathematics and Computing. The partnership with Leo continues, although The Leo School now has a new headteacher. The partnership transformed into a 'soft confederation' to include most local feeder schools in 2004. The Federation seeks to address the issue of rural isolation and has had an early focus on cross-phase activities to address the gap KS2-3. Learning Partnerships are already underway in Numeracy, Literacy, ICT, Investigative Science, Thinking Skills and Learning Styles. Virgo hosts the Federation Extranet to share best practice and is at the hub of the Federation's nine schools. The Virgo head continues to drive the improvement of the school and a new housing development will in the medium term provide a fresh intake of pupils.

The Aries School is still on the Register for SCC, Level 1. The past two years have been a roller coaster ride for the school and it remains a troubled school. The partnership with The Gemini School dwindled away and there is no contact. The celebrated emergence from special measures in Spring 2003 was followed by a dramatic drop in results at KS3 and KS4 in summer 2003. This attracted close attention from DfES and the LEA and the school was inspected in Autumn 2004 and placed in serious weakness. Over this time the LEA began losing confidence in the Aries headteacher to lead improvement although this conflicts with the view of HMI. Despite support through the LEA and the LIG collaborative, results have not improved and remain significantly below expectations, recruitment and retention of staff is serious issue, and the intake has plummeted. Meanwhile the headteacher of the 'effective' school in the LIG Collaborative approached the DfES with a view to federating his school with The Aries School as a radical plan to secure improvement. The Aries head admits to having run short of ideas and with his Governors and the support of the LEA, has agreed to merge the Governors and the Senior Teams from both schools from January 2006. The Aries head and deputy have taken up new roles in the partner school. The 'effective' headteacher is now executive principal of both schools and one of his assistant is associate head of The Aries School. Plans for the future centre on the federated school becoming an Academy. The Aries School was unable to sustain improvements; while the head was able to bring the school out of special measures, there was not the capacity to keep it out. The Federation offers another life line to the sinking school!

The Libra School is still on the Register for SCC Level 1. The Libra School remained 'suck' until the partnership with Edison UK (2003) 'kick started' improvement. The Ofsted report (2004) removed the school from serious weaknesses and commented on good leadership and management and the positive impact of the Edison Programme. This Edison programme sought to create 'schools within schools' to boost a sense of community and belonging; an innovative approach to basic skills prepared teachers to teach reading and literacy. The single focus on Edison and the associated staff development was praised by Ofsted (2004) and by Investors in People (2005). Partnership activities continue through the Excellence Cluster and the Confederation of schools. Collaboration on School Centred Initial Teacher Training and the Graduate Teachers Programme resolved issues of recruitment and retention. In addition the Libra School now benefits from a major new build and refurbishment programme which impacts positively on pupil behaviour and motivation. A new ICT infrastructure is in place and is used extensively across the curriculum. The building of another school in the locality has eased the pressure of pupil numbers and provides a more comprehensive intake. The Libra School now hosts the Collaborative Post 16 College with offers vocational pathways in conjunction with the local FE College and two other local high schools. Although standards of attainment at KS3 show signs of improvement they remain significantly below those of similar schools; strategies for improvement have yet to impact on standards at KS4.

The Pisces School remains on the Register of SCC Level 1, mainly because of the vulnerable situation regarding falling rolls and the dire financial position. Results have continued to show an upward trend and the school achieved Specialist Status in 2005. This has not however helped turn the tide of pupil recruitment or perceptions in the town. The headteacher maintains a cautious partnership with other schools in the LIG and there is some limited sharing of practice. Capacity to improve further is limited by loss of specialist teachers, financial issues, low intake numbers and uncertainty about the future. Closure is a likely option as the decline in population across the town results in there not being enough pupils to go round. The Pisces School is still perceived as the bottom of the pile. The head feels isolated in her sinking school, neglected by the LEA, undermined by some local schools and disappointed that improvements have not changed the schools fortunes. Not surprisingly, she will not meet with her SIP; 'how can I talk about school improvement when I'm fighting to keep the school open!'